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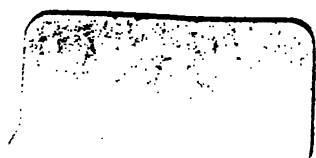
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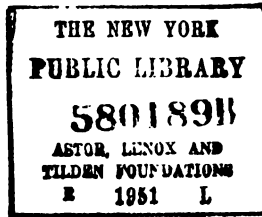
A Nation's Defeat

The Story of a Young Man
By **WILLIAM L. BURNETT**



Illustrated by
WILLIAM L. BURNETT

NEW YORK: THE CENTURY CO., 1917



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PREFACE.

This story is based upon an actual franchise contest and in many of its essential features is substantially true.

The outcome shows that the fight made in behalf of the rights of the people, not only redounded to their benefit, but also to that of the street railway company.

It is a lesson that the public utility corporations ought to heed, or it would seem to be inevitable that the wave of public sentiment that is now sweeping over the country will land all public utilities in the haven of municipal ownership.

C. F. G.

Columbus, Ohio, 1906.

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Dedicated

To all those who are fighting the battle for civic virtue

Justice herself, that sitteth whimp'd 'bout
The eyes, doth it not because she will take
No gold, but that she would not be seen blushing
When she takes it; the balances she holds
Are not to weigh the rights of the cause, but
The weight of the bribe; she will put up her
Naked sword, if thou offer her a golden scabbard.
—*Lilly's Midas.*

'Tis pleasant, purchasing our fellow creatures,
And all are to be sold, if you consider
Their passions, and are dex'trous; some by features
Are bought up, others by a warlike leader,
Some by a place, as tend their years or natures;
The most by ready cash—but all have prices,
From crowns to kicks, according to their vices.
—*Byron.*

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CHAPTER I.

THE ELECTION.

It was the day after the State and Congressional election.

Dusk was falling on Colando, the capital city of one of the great states of the Union, and the last rays of the November sun were shotting the western sky with beams of reddish light as of some far distant conflagration. The glare was reflected from the windows of the capitol building which stood in the center of the great square in the heart of the city—a big, sombre pile, whose solid walls and massive pillars gave the impression of dignity and immutability—an example of the highest type of ancient architecture, had its symmetry not been marred by its being capped by a creation called by courtesy a dome, but which resembled nothing so much as a huge cheese box.

Whether this dome was intended as symbolical of the uses to which the building was to be put, history is silent, but it is a well known fact, that among a certain class of legislators it was not un-

THE END

common to hear the remark: "We are going to cut cheese today."

Not infrequently this was an imported cheese of the New York brand which is generally accepted as the richest, creamiest and most nourishing for both political and domestic consumption.

As Robert Barker sat with his feet elevated on his desk in his office nearly opposite the capitol, the thought was crystalizing in his mind that were it not for the base work which had been there enacted, he would not now be the victim of such conflicting emotions.

The reverie of Barker was broken suddenly by a cheer, faint but distinct, above the ceaseless rumble of the traffic on the busy street below. A few moments elapsed, when the cheering was repeated with more vigor. Swinging himself slowly around from his desk, he went to the window and looked out.

About a square distant, the lights revealed a constantly augmenting crowd in front of the windows of the "Chronicle" office, from which gathering, groups would quickly detach themselves every few moments, and, scattering in various directions, split the air with their cheers as they ran.

While Barker was still gazing at this scene with great interest and wondering as to the nature of the news that would cause such a demonstration, he heard the tread of swiftly moving feet along the



corridor leading to his office, the door flew open, and Charlie Marston rushed into the room in the breezy, half-reckless style so natural to him, exclaiming: "Hello, Bob, how are you?"

"First rate, Charlie, how are you?" turning on the electric light as he spoke.

"Oh, so, so. My liver seems a little torpid, but my assimilating department is all right."

"Well, that's good news. You seem to have so much to look after since you began the study of medicine. I wonder that you keep going as well as you do."

"It's simply a question of digestion and assimilation, and I can assimilate anything from a soft shelled crab to a 'newspaper scoop.' But have you heard the latest from the Congressional fight?"

"I don't know, I supposed it was settled that Judge Henley was elected by a small majority."

"Not on your life. The voters up there in Union got a bad case of Scratches, and scratched the Judge so hard for his vote on the Franchise Bill that he wasn't able to get his nose under the wire."

"You don't say so? I thought the returns from Union County assured his election by a small margin."

"So they did, if the scratchers hadn't got in their work on his anatomy in such great shape. That franchise business knocked him clean out. By Jove! it's immense! Our boys are going around with a

smile on 'em that will reach from Key West to Cuba. Hoop! Hurrah! Do you hear that?"

Just at this time a party of men on the street passing the office were cheering boisterously, "Hurrah for Holmes!"

"I was just wondering when you came in, Charlie, whether I did right in taking the part I did. I am pleased, of course, at Colonel Holmes' success, but I can't help feeling a great deal of sympathy for Judge Henley."

"Well, you needn't waste any sympathy on the Judge. He's as bitter against you as quinine. I heard him say, that, if he were defeated, it would be due to your demagogic speeches in Union on the Franchise Bill. He thinks it didn't require any tax on your gray matter to do that, but simply to work the muscles of your jaw."

Barker's smile was constrained and there was a little gleam of anger in his eyes as he replied: "I was pretty hot in my denunciation of that legislation, but it was because I honestly felt that way."

"Right you are, my boy, wasn't I with you and saw you feeding it to 'em? The Press gave you credit for it too, and I tell you Bob, there ain't anything too good for you in this or in Union County."

They were interrupted by a voice from the street.

"Three cheers for Barker!" and several voices joined vigorously in a "Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!"

"You know better than any one else, Charlie, to

whom was due the credit I received from the Press."

"I am giving it to you straight, old man. But what's the matter? You look as blue as if you had been fed on nitrate of silver for about six months."

"Nothing special, I just feel a little depressed today."

"I think I know how the land lies up there at the Judge's, but brace up, Bob," putting a hand on his shoulder. "Keep a stiff upper lip and you'll come out all right."

"That's comforting, I'll try to act on your advice."

"That's right. I'm long on advice and I'm not a bit stingy in parting with some of it to my friends. Good-bye, I'm off! See you again."

When his friend had closed the door behind him, Barker, resting his elbows on the desk and his face in his hands, sat deeply absorbed in meditation.

Largely through the influence of his friend, Charlie Marston, he had allowed himself to become interested in the last two campaigns, and, before he realized it, was completely immersed in the politics of the district. His interest had been almost perfunctory at the start, but as he studied the questions which affected the interests of the common people, his whole heart became absorbed in the work, and it grew to be almost a passion with him to protect their rights and aid in any way possible

for the amelioration of their condition. His fervid and graceful oratory had attracted marked attention, and this, added to his high standing at the bar and as a man, had already made him one of the most conspicuous figures in the district.

He had been a law student under Judge Henley, and was indebted to him very greatly for aid extended during that period and in the early years of his practice. Three years previously the Judge had changed his politics of a lifetime, and this action had been met with such a storm of invective and abuse by his former associates that he soon became—as is often the case with new converts—more radical in his antagonism to his old party than he had ever been to the one he now espoused. His new-found friends had rewarded him almost immediately by a nomination to the State Senate, and before the expiration of his term he was further honored by being made the Congressional nominee.

The district was a close one, and the fight had been waged with the greatest vigor and much bitterness. The Judge owed his nomination largely to influences brought to bear in his behalf, by reason of his introduction and very able championship of the "Fifty Year Franchise Bill," a measure purely in the interest of public service corporations. It had been rushed through near the close of the session of the legislature by the aid of a powerful lobby, numbering among its members, Senators Marcan

and Benson, two of the leading statesmen of the country—bitter political enemies and rivals, but with two hearts that beat as one in the interests of corporate monopoly.

That these gentlemen were entitled to be called leading statesmen could hardly admit of question. It is true that the most prominent one had never made a political speech, written an article on a political topic, or ever been openly identified with the origination of any public measure, but he could draw a check for a fabulous sum and had the magic touch which loosened the purse strings of all the great millionaires and corporations. He was also supposed to have a mortgage on the President of the United States, and was the chief dispenser of patronage for the state and country. In short, he possessed all the qualifications—under modern definitions—of a great statesman.

The colleague was equally eminent in his line of work. Though his machine had but recently been superceded by that of his associate it was not to be despised. He was an orator of great ability and a master of finance, as evidenced by his becoming a millionaire in a few years on an annual salary of \$5,000. His charity was overflowing. It is said of him, that no poor weak corporation with a capital of only a few millions ever appealed to him for aid in vain. At the call, he would give up the entrancing precincts of the cloak room in the capi-

tol at Washington and girding on his armour, would hie him away to the State capitol to do battle for these victims of oppression, with no other inducement than a little slip of paper, bearing six magic numerals with a signature attached, as a mere evidence of good faith.

The Senator had too, that faraway look in his eyes so characteristic of the great statesman, and those who claimed to be in direct line with his vision said they were fixed on the presidential chair, far, far away.

Surely with such attributes as have been mentioned no one would seriously question his right to the title of leading statesman. Many, even, conferred upon both these gentlemen the additional titles of Mental Healer and Doctor of Laws.

Whenever the timid legislators would have an attack of rigors from the absorption of public sentiment, how deftly and gently these Senatorial doctors would relieve their trembling by pointing out to them how easy it was to check its ravages by the passage of Anti-trust legislation—with an innocent little sleeper in it—that would be all the public demanded, minus the prefix.

In Barker's opinion the franchise act was of the most vicious character, and in fact, the public corporations of the State began to take advantage of it at once. He had tried hard to reconcile his conscience to a merely passive opposition to Judge

Henley, but his sense of public duty at last triumphed and he had gone into the fight with intense energy.

Aside from his high personal regard for his old preceptor there was another very important reason why he disliked to antagonize him—the Judge had a daughter.

From her twelfth to her fifteenth year, Barker had been closely associated with her while a student in the Judge's office, and they were warm friends. After he became engaged in practice, they drifted apart for some years, but he had watched with interest her gradual metamorphosis from his girlish young friend into a fully developed and glorious woman.

During the past year he had departed from his rule of declining social invitations, and, owing to his attractive personality and prominence in his profession, he was admitted to the most exclusive circles.

In this way, he was again thrown in contact with Irene Henley, and they soon became quite intimate, but he had only realized the depth of his interest in her when it became necessary to decide whether he should publicly and actively oppose her father's election to Congress.

Returning from a stumping tour of the district the night preceding the election, he found himself

dwelling more upon his intense desire to see Irene than upon the result of the campaign.

His position was an embarrassing one; his personal sympathies were with the Judge and his daughter, while politically and publicly his desires were entirely in behalf of the opposing candidate.

CHAPTER II.

A COOL RECEPTION.

As Barker made his way towards the home of Judge Henley the following evening he was conscious of a sense of trepidation such as he had never before experienced.

Standing at the gate he gazed over the spacious grounds, dotted here and there with the original trees of the forest, among which was silhouetted the large, old-fashioned mansion of the Judge. Every line and pediment of it bespoke the character and exclusiveness of its inmates, and he wondered whether he would ever again be a welcome guest within its portals.

Finally summoning all his courage he passed up the walk and boldly rang the bell. The ring was answered by Aunt Liza, the old and trusted colored housekeeper who had come from the South and had been with the Judge prior to the birth of the daughter.

"How are you, Aunt Liza? Is Irene at home?"

His acquaintance dating back to Irene's early girlhood, he spoke of her without formality.

"How is yoh, Mistah Bahkah? Ise sutenly glad to see yoh. Come right in en tuk ah seat in de pahlah. Miss Irene she done gwine up stairs des ah minute ah go. I'll tell her dat yoh's heah." fi

"Thank you, Aunt Liza."

"Not at all, Honey, but des let me gib yoh ah little pintah. You wants toh be mighty humble lik' en des ac' yo' sweetes', kase de Jedge is powahful sot ahgin yoh, en Miss Irene aint feelin' des de kindnes' in de world towards yoh eidah."

"I'll take your advice, Aunty. But what makes you think the Judge is prejudiced against me?"

"Kase it's ah fac' chile. Sumpin ah bout dis politics bisness. I doan ezac'ly undahstan' it, but I knows he's des as bittah ezz bittah kin be. But fo de Lawds sake doan yoh let on I'se bin talkin' toh yoh. It 'ud be ez much ez my head's wuf."

"You can depend on me, Aunty, I'll not get you into any trouble."

As Miss Henley swept into the room, dressed in a trailing house costume of some soft material which fell about her person in a way that suggested without emphasizing the outlines of her gracefully moulded form, with her head held in a regal poise and a latent gleam of anger in her brown eyes, Barker drew in his breath sharply, as it came home to him how much it meant to be ban-

ished from the presence of this queenly woman. He advanced to meet her with outstretched hand, "How do you do, Irene? I am glad to see you again."

"How do you do, Mr. Barker?" Bowing coldly and not appearing to notice the hand.

Hiding his embarrassment as best he could he resumed his seat, while she seated herself some distance away. "I hope you have been well since I have been away," he ventured.

"Very well, thank you."

"I have looked forward with a good deal of pleasure to meeting you, Irene, but I should feel like immediately leaving town again, if everyone extended me such a welcome as you have," he said in a half-jesting tone, but with an appealing smile.

"Have you been occupied in such a way that you feel that it ought to assure you a very cordial welcome?"

"Surely you would not let that affect your welcome?"

"Surely, Mr. Barker, you can't expect a very cordial reception at our hands, when you have been devoting the whole time of your absence to fighting Father," her eyes were snapping now and her heightened color and restless manner betrayed the difficulty she had in controlling herself.

He was not surprised at this display of feeling, but had hardly expected it to be put so plainly into

words. "Look here, Irene, hasn't your father always taken an active part in politics for years, both as a manager and on the stump?"

"I believe he has," very coldly.

"He is a very strong partisan too, isn't he?"

"You know as much about that as I do."

"Well, now be frank about it. Did he ever support a political opponent against the nominee of his own party on the ground of personal friendship?"

"I don't know whether he did or not, but I know he does what he thinks is right."

"But don't you think that I should be accorded the same privilege as your father, Irene? I have the highest respect and regard for the Judge, but I am opposed to him politically on principle. Without desiring to reflect upon him, you can easily recall that a few years ago your father was just as ardent a supporter of my party as I am myself. In fact, he probably did more to inculcate the views and principles which now govern my actions than any man living."

"But why did you attack him so bitterly?"

"I never even mentioned the Judge's name in my speeches during the past campaign, but I did attack and with all my power, the Franchise Bill which he had especially championed."

"And that is the way you turned so many against him."

"You are probably giving me too much credit,

but even if it were true, wasn't it my privilege?"

"Yes, of course it was your privilege, and it's ours to resent it."

At this moment, Mr. Albert Morse, a young attorney, prominent both socially and professionally, was announced. He greeted Barker rather patronizingly and his speech and manner carried a sort of proprietary right to be there, as he remarked: "You've been away so much lately, Barker, that I never thought of meeting you here. I fear I've put myself in the awkward position, indicated by the old saying, 'Two's company, three's a crowd.'"

The interruption was particularly unwelcome to Barker, and his ease of mind was not added to by Irene's response: "You need have no fear, Mr. Morse, on that score." Did she emphasize the you slightly?

Barker's smile was forced, as, endeavoring to speak lightly, he said, "I have been trying, Morse, to justify myself in opposing the Judge's election. It seems I have not made much headway so far."

"I confess I felt very much as you did about the franchise matter," was the reply, "but my liking for the Judge got the better of my principles, so I voted for him."

The smile of approval which Irene turned upon him was as evidently gratifying to Morse as it was rebuking to Barker. The latter winced as he answered, "I have the highest regard and friend-

ship for the Judge, but I couldn't consistently support him. I trust Miss Henley will be able to see it in that light when she considers it carefully."

"Since you insist on discussing the matter in Mr. Morse's presence," Irene replied with some asperity, "you will pardon me for saying, that the kind of friendship that seeks to injure the object of it does not appeal to me very strongly."

"But, Irene, you don't take into consideration that a man's political principles are entirely impersonal and—"

"I can see no use of our continuing this discussion further, Mr. Barker," Irene interrupted, "It is not likely it will change your views and I know it cannot change my feelings."

"Very well," rising and moving towards the door.

"I am sorry you are not willing to allow me to express myself fully. I appreciate your great personal disappointment for your father's sake, but I thought you had too much good common sense and too much nobility of character, to condemn any one for doing what he deemed his duty."

She had risen as he prepared to leave, but without making any effort to detain him. In their earnestness they had become almost oblivious to the presence of Mr. Morse. He was in the act of throwing aside the portieres to make his exit as she delivered her parting shot.

"It is very humiliating to me to know that my



"FATHER! FATHER!
YOU FORGET THAT MR. BARKER IS MY GUEST!"—Page 29

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common sense and nobility of character are so far below your estimate. I will try, however, to bear the humiliation as best I may!" She felt the weakness of her position and obviously tried to stimulate her anger by resorting to sarcasm and intemperance of expression.

As Barker stepped into the hall, the door opened and Judge Henley entered. Attracted by the noise, Robert turned and said: "Good evening, Judge."

"Good evening, Sir. Did you wish to see me?"

"Not particularly, Sir, I called in to see Irene."

"I was going to say that if you wished to see me on business, my office is open at the usual hours. I make a distinction, however, between those whom I receive socially at my home, and those whom I receive on business."

It was like a blow in the face, and an angry retort was on the younger man's lips when Irene stepped impulsively forward and laid her hand on her father's arm as she said: "Father! Father! You forget that Mr. Barker is my guest."

"I do not forget that this is my house," he answered as he shook himself free and stalked down the hall and entered the library, closing the door with a bang.

In the meantime Barker had taken his hat and was moving to the door. As he opened it, Irene came swiftly toward him, "I regret exceedingly that Father should have spoken as he did, and I

am certain he will regret it on reflection. I cannot invite you to call again under the circumstances, but I—Good-bye, Mr. Barker.”

He put out his hand, “Good-night, Irene.”

She placed her hand fully in his, but his fingers were hardly closed about it, when she withdrew it hurriedly and stepped back.

Bowing silently, he passed out and closed the door behind him.

CHAPTER III.

JUDGE HENLEY IS ASSAULTED.

It was some days after the call upon Miss Henley that Barker was sitting at his desk surrounded with law books, when he was interrupted by the abrupt entrance of Marston and his cheery voice exclaiming, "Hello, Bob! What are you working at so hard?"

"I'm getting ready for the injunction case against the Bellevue Mill strikers that comes off this afternoon."

"Who represents the other side?"

"I understand that Judge Henley is the principal counsel."

"Is that so? I must hear it. By the way, have you ever been to the Judge's house since the election?"

"Yes, once."

"Did they give you a pretty warm reception?"

"It was hardly probable that they would have a very cordial feeling towards me under the circumstances."

"You know I don't want to pry into your private

affairs, Bob, but I had a curiosity to know, on account of something Alice Benson was telling me about what Miss Henley said to that little spitfire of a Susie Allen."

"How's that?"

"Well, Alice told me that Miss Henley was spending the afternoon with her the other day, when the Allen girl came in and after condoling with Irene over her father's defeat, said she hoped she had got enough of you now. They had quite a little tilt over it, and finally Irene asked her who her father voted for. 'Why, for the Judge, of course,' was the reply, and then Irene wanted to know if Mr. Allen and Col. Holmes were enemies, and Susie had to acknowledge that they were warm friends and classmates at College, but that her father said he was on the wrong ticket for him.

"Then why shouldn't Mr. Barker vote against Father because he was on the wrong ticket for him?" Irene asked.

"That seemed to be a poser for Susie, so she merely stuck up her nose in that aggravating way of hers and said: 'Well, if you're satisfied, I'm sure I am,' and then the little smart aleck dried up."

"You are not very respectful in your reference to Miss Allen," Barker said laughingly. He was conscious of a feeling of joy and exultation such as he had been a stranger to for some time past.

This feeling was somewhat dampened by the

thought that the contest between himself and the Judge that very afternoon would serve to intensify the antagonism of the latter.

The case was one which had attracted much attention.

The Bellevue Rolling Mills, located on the outskirts of the city, were having a strike, and the strikers had been exceedingly active in intercepting the workmen who had been imported from some other localities to take their places, and in prevailing on them to quit work.

This had become so irritating to the company that they had applied for an injunction to prevent the men from keeping out pickets and, in any way, either by threats or persuasion, endeavoring to influence the employes from working.

The court had granted a temporary injunction, and the question of making it permanent was to be argued that afternoon.

The feeling ran high, not only among the many hundred employes of the mill, but also among the laboring men and mechanics throughout the city. The interest was but little less intense among the manufacturing employers, though not so publicly displayed.

When Robert and Charlie reached the Court room it was crowded. In addition to those directly interested there was also present a large contingent of that rough element, that abounds in every

city, the members of which very seldom work, but are almost always the instigators and perpetrators of the violence which does so much to bring the honest workingman into discredit during the periods of industrial disturbance.

Though Judge Henley was a man with plenty of courage, as well as strong prejudices, he was also considerable of a politician, and it was not at all probable he would have accepted such a case prior to the election. He now felt, however, that he had no political ambitions immediately at stake, and was probably greatly embittered against the class of men who had antagonized him so strongly on account of his Franchise Bill.

While the argument in favor of the restraining order was logical and plausible from his standpoint, dwelling with much force upon the right of corporations and individuals to conduct their business without interference from outsiders, as well as with the absolute necessity of protecting the rights of property, the Judge was specially bitter and scathing in his denunciation of the strikers.

During the speech there was much muttering and growling, with an occasional low voiced, but bitter, imprecation against the speaker.

Barker's speech was equally earnest, but more temperate in tone, as he appealed to the Court to consider well before exercising a power of such far-reaching significance.

He called attention to the abuse of this power of injunction, which had become so flagrant, that not only thousands but millions of people were protesting against it, because of its growing use as the most effective weapon for oppressing the poor and weak.

He then proceeded to show the great disadvantages under which the men labored as compared with their employers. The latter could advertise for men in distant cities or send agents to secure them, and they were brought to take the places of the former workmen in complete ignorance of the conditions existing, or possessed of only such knowledge as they could gain by an ex-parte statement from an interested party. In many instances, men were inveigled into accepting employment under such circumstances, and even when they found the true state of affairs, were forced to work or be left stranded and penniless in a strange city.

All the striking men asked was an opportunity to present their side of the case and use their powers of persuasion to induce them to act in unison with their fellows. Surely, if the employer had the opportunity to present his side of the case, the workman should have the same right and still be within the law.

He closed his remarks with an appeal to the Court to uphold the majesty of the law; that law which was intended for the protection of life and

property, but which held the rights of the man above that of the sordid dollar.

So well assured did he feel, as to the desire of the leaders and strikers to keep the peace, that he ended his address by volunteering his services to prosecute any of them who were guilty of rioting or violence towards the men who had gone to work.

The Court ruled in his favor immediately, and the temporary injunction was dissolved.

Judge Henley left the Court room in a very irritable humor, muttering so that he could be overheard by those in the vicinity, his opinion of the strikers and their sympathizers in no very complimentary way. These remarks were instantly resented, and many abusive epithets were applied to him.

At last some one back of him reached over those immediately in front, and struck his hat. He wheeled around with a fierce scowl and inquired, "Who did that?"

There was no reply, but he had hardly turned his back before some one, more in the spirit of mischief than of malice, shoved another man with such force against the Judge that he nearly lost his balance.

He was a man not easily intimidated, and, acting on the impulse, he turned and with the exclamation, "Take that—you miserable rascal!" gave the

man who had been shoved against him a resounding thwack with his cane.

Hardly had the blow been delivered before his cane was wrenched from his grasp and he was knocked down and a dozen men struggled to strike or kick him. For a few moments he was in imminent peril of his life.

Barker and Marston were some distance behind the Judge in emerging from the Court House, and consequently had not observed him until they noticed the commotion in the crowd and recognized him as he raised his cane to strike.

As they saw him go down, they ran with all speed to his assistance. Barker was a man of great strength, and he plunged fearlessly into the crowd, flinging men right and left, shouting: "Quit that, you scoundrels," while Marston vigorously seconded his efforts.

Just as the former reached the side of the prostrate Judge, a man was aiming a blow at him with the cane which had been wrested from him. Springing forward, Barker intercepted it with one arm over which the cane broke, while with the other he delivered a blow which sent the man sprawling to the pavement.

In the short time which it took to assist the Judge to his feet, the gathering had disappeared as if by magic, and no one would have known save

by his bruised and dilapidated appearance that there had been any scene of violence enacted.

Though almost within the precincts of the Court House no officer had witnessed the disturbance, and in the excitement no one was identified as having been engaged in it except the victim.

It transpired, however, that there was an intensely interested spectator. Irene Henley was driving up the street in her phaeton, and while some distance away she noticed the surging crowd and recognized her father as the object of the attack.

She whipped up her horse and on arriving at the spot sprang from the vehicle, and rushed to her father's side in wild excitement and agitation just as he was helped to his feet.

Putting her arms around him, she cried: "Oh, Father, are you much hurt?"

"Don't make a fuss, Irene, there's nothing to be scared about," he replied rather gruffly.

"I was afraid you would be killed when I saw all those horrible men striking you. What in the world possessed them, Father?"

"It was about what I might have expected from such a crowd," he answered, "but I will make some of them smart for it yet."

"I hope so," she said vindictively. "It was a fortunate thing that Mr. Barker and Mr. Marston

were so near or those brutes might have killed you," and she looked at them gratefully.

"Yes, I suppose Barker did not want to be responsible for my murder; he was content simply to arouse the passions of those brutes so that they would assault an inoffensive citizen on the streets who had the courage to designate them as they are. He called them off when he thought they had gone far enough."

Robert was amazed and confounded at this charge. "You certainly cannot think I had any sympathy with such a dastardly outrage upon you, Sir!" he exclaimed.

"When a man sics a savage dog on another, he can't always tell how much he will mangle his victim," the Judge responded.

Irene was terribly agitated during the delivery of these remarks, which passed between the parties as she was conducting her father towards the phaeton. The look of distress on her face was so apparent that Barker made no effort to reply, knowing it would only aggravate the situation.

As her father stepped into the phaeton she turned and for an instant her eyes met those of Barker and Marston.

"I thank you, gentlemen, for the great service you have rendered Father," she said, and, seating herself, drove away.

At this moment they were joined by Hugh Gal-

vin, the President of the Central Labor Union, and James Stewart, the head of the local lodges of the mill workers, who had retained Barker as counsel. Their faces wore a troubled expression, for they had learned of the assault on Judge Henley.

"What effect will this affair have on our prospects, Mr. Barker?" asked Galvin.

"It can't help but hurt you, and it ought to," said Barker, "it was a damnable outrage to assault an old man like Judge Henley, who was clearly within his rights under the law."

"We know that as well as you do, Mr. Barker," said Stewart. "We wouldn't have had it happen for anything. Try and make it as easy on us as possible, Marston, in the paper," he continued, turning to Charlie. "We get roasted enough for what we are not to blame for, so you can afford to be a little easy on us occasionally."

"I'll not rub it in, very hard, and I'll try to get the old man not to display it too much, but it's got to be condemned, of course."

"It puts me in a very embarrassing position," Robert exclaimed. "If I knew who the offenders were, I'd gladly aid in prosecuting them."

"My God, Barker, don't we realize that as well as you?" said Galvin. "Don't we work night and day to keep these hot heads under control? We can usually do it with our own men, but those outside the organization or some half drunken fools get

into a brawl, and then we have to take the blame."

"I have no doubt you are right. Watch your men, though, Galvin, and you too, Stewart, I am greatly in sympathy with your people in this fight; I believe you are in the right; but a few more breaks like this afternoon will utterly destroy any chance you may have to win."

When they were left alone, Charlie gave a low whistle and looked at Barker. "What did you think of it, Bob? Didn't it jar you?"

"Think of what?"

"Oh, you know. I mean of that old crank and Irene."

"I hardly know what to think."

"Don't you admire the old man's nerve? Save his life and then have him turn around and accuse you of the whole thing. Why he'll hate you worse than poison now."

"I guess that's so, Charlie. I'm sorry too. I'd like to be on friendly terms with the Judge."

"Well, there's no use worrying about that. There's one good thing you've learned though."

"What's that?"

"Never interfere to save a man's life. When he's dead you can attend his funeral and have a friendly feeling for the corpse, and then if he has an attractive daughter you can go ahead without any one to bother you."

"Oh, pshaw, Charlie, it's too serious a matter to me to joke about."

"Don't mind me, Bob, but there is one thing sure, without joking. You have made yourself solid with Irene. Didn't she look immense though, when she thanked us just as she drove off? Kind of on her ear towards the old man, kind of ashamed for him, and kind of appealing to us not to be too hard on him or to make any mistake about her own feelings."

Barker looked at him closely. Was it possible that he had read in her expression and the tones of her voice just what he himself had interpreted?

It gave him a keen sense of pleasure to have his own judgment corroborated, and yet he had a distinct sense of embarrassment. Laughing with assumed indifference, he said: "You better drop your newspaper work, Charlie, and set up for a mind-reader."

"Her's was not the only mind I read."

"Don't give too much away at once," Barker interrupted hastily. "Wait till you can hire a hall."

"All right, old man, I'm done."

The Judge's physical characteristics were typical of his disposition: rather portly, with ruddy complexion, smooth face, large nose, bushy eyebrows, heavy iron gray hair on a massive head, and his lips so firmly drawn that they slightly pursed. He was ruled by his convictions and his prejudices, but

had a grim sense of humor that often broke out at most unexpected times. Never a very popular man, he was always forceful and influential; besides being a man of his word and strictly honest in business transactions.

He had served on the bench, but had retired from it as the work was ill suited to one of his aggressive nature, and also paid much less than his law practice.

Irene's ride home with her father was not a pleasant one. She was very indignant at the cowardly attack upon him and intensely sympathetic, but it pained her to see him give way so entirely to his feeling of vindictiveness, the greater portion of which seemed to be directed against Barker.

"But, Father, Mr. Barker protected you from those horrible men. It seems to me you ought to give him credit for that, at least," she said finally in interruption of his tirade.

"Protected, protected!" he snorted, "what do you know about protection?"

"I know that I saw you thrown to the ground and the mob striking and kicking at you when he and Mr. Marston ran up and threw the men right and left, and drove them off."

"I don't suppose he wanted me murdered on the street; but if he had kept his radical mouth shut no one would have thought of attacking me."

Though believing her father did Barker injus-

tice, she had no doubt he had been in a measure responsible for arousing the passions that had culminated in the attack she had witnessed, but she ventured to say timidly: "Maybe you may have said something that angered them."

"Maybe I may have said something? Well, haven't I a right to say something? Isn't this a free country? Can't a man say what he thinks?"

"Possibly Mr. Barker said what he thought," she suggested.

"Well he hasn't any right to think, if his thoughts incite men to murder and violence."

"I can hardly think that Mr. Barker——"

"Well, don't think! Barker! Barker! I'm tired of seeing and tired of hearing of Barker. I'll Barker him if I get a chance."

"I'll promise not to think or speak or do anything if you won't look so cross at me," she said, playfully squeezing his arm, as it dawned upon her that any mention of Barker simply aggravated him the more.

"I guess I am a little grumpier than usual," he replied, relaxing the grim expression a little, "but I'm sore, and in more ways than one."

CHAPTER IV.

A BLANKET FRANCHISE.

Charlie Marston dropped wearily into a chair at one of the tables in the Bostwick Cafe. "I want something to eat, Danny," he said to the waiter, with whom he was well acquainted, "and I don't know what it is I want."

"Maybe I'd better set you out a big feed like I did Mr. Milligan, the Mayor, and the other big Moguls last night and let you take your choice," Danny answered jokingly.

The scent for News was at once aroused and Marston could hardly restrain his eagerness as he asked carelessly, "Who else was there besides Milligan and the Mayor?"

"Oh, Judge Henley, Joe Hartman, and all of the Mayor's cabinet."

"Did they all come in here together?"

"No they came one at a time and went away the same way. But they didn't eat down here, they had a private room upstairs."

"They must have had a swell time," Marston

said with an appearance of trying to make a show of interest. "What did they talk about?"

"Don't ask me, I was only in the room a part of the time. The most I heard was something about a Blanket Franchise, whatever that is."

When pressed for something more explicit, the boy became alarmed and refused to talk, as he said the proprietor had instructed the men that such affairs were strictly confidential.

It took Marston but a little time to finish his lunch after that, and he was fairly bubbling over with excitement when he burst into Barker's office with the exclamation, "I've got a Scoop, Bob!"

Barker smiled indulgently. "One of the kind you can assimilate?" he inquired.

"That's the question. I don't know whether to use it or not."

"Well, I'd go very slow if you have any scruples about your right to use it."

"Oh, come off, Bob, that isn't what's bothering me. The question is whether this is the time to spring it."

"What is it?"

As soon as Marston mentioned Blanket Franchise, Barker's indifference ceased and he became intensely alert and interested, and as Charlie concluded with the remark, "There's something on and I want to get at it," Barker responded.

"You are right, Charlie, there is something on.

You know the Street Railway Company is a consolidation of several of the old lines, whose franchises expire at different times. I suppose if they were really talking about a Blanket Franchise it means a franchise covering all their lines, which would make them all expire at the same time."

"Now I begin to catch on. Here's where the Judge's Fifty Year Franchise bill comes in."

"Probably. But I can see some advantages in renewing their franchises one at a time, as that would occasion less opposition."

"That's all right, but they probably know the Council will hold them up any how, and if they only have to buy 'em up once in fifty years, it will save 'em lots of trouble and lots of money."

"There's something in that, if they would resort to such tactics."

"Resort to such tactics! You can bet your life that they will resort to anything to carry their point. Greed and Conscience don't flourish in the same soil."

"But even if the Company are willing to resort to corrupt measures, would the Mayor and his Cabinet consent to enter into such a deal?"

"I happen to know that the Street Railway Company has the Mayor mortgaged for a certainty."

"But how about the Directors?"

"I can't speak from personal knowledge about them, but it has been openly charged that the

Director of Public Works has had a 'divvy' on the sewer contracts, and when you get next to the gamblers and liquor men they hardly make a secret of the fact that the Director of Public Safety has a 'rake off' on every slot machine and gambling joint in the city. But what do these Directors have to do with the Franchise?"

"The Charter Law of the City requires that franchises of this character shall be first recommended to the Council by the Board of Public Works, consisting of the Mayor and his Cabinet."

"That's a fact, I'd forgotten it. Well, you can gamble on it that there's going to be some slick work done to get this thing through. Milligan, the Gen'l Manager, is the man that pulls the strings, and Joe Hartman is their General Lobbyist. He's smooth as velvet, and knows just those he can reach and how to reach them."

"But you don't think Judge Henley would be a party to any corrupt transaction?"

"Are you as easy as you pretend to be, Bob, or are you trying to josh me?"

"I think I know something of the corrupt methods pursued by some of these great corporations, but I have not lost all faith in humanity yet, and I hope I never shall."

"That's all right, of course, but you don't get on to these things as I do, as a newspaper man."

"Now, Judge Henley, for instance, could not be

bribed directly nor would he directly bribe any one else; but he believes, probably, that whatever legislation they will ask for is right and just, and if Hartman says it will be worth fifty or one hundred thousand to get it through, he would advise that it be expended. Why there are plenty of men in this city connected with corporations that buy legislation, who are so conscientious that they will not attend a primary of their party to nominate officials because politics are so corrupt. The funny thing about it, too, is—that they are honest about it.”

“Such corporations must be very secret in their methods not to get found out.”

“Oh, not so very. There’s hardly ever a job on in the Council or Legislature, but those who are watching things feel morally certain of what’s going on, though it may be impossible to get proof.”

“Thanks, Charlie; now let’s get down to business. If you are right about the Company applying for a Blanket Franchise, I want to do everything in my power to see that the people get as good a bargain as possible.”

“I am with you on that, Bob.”

“I took that for granted. Now what is the best thing to do? It seems to me we’d better have a quiet conference first, and map out our plan of campaign. I’ll see a few I know that can be

depended on, and you invite as many as you think best."

"When shall we hold it, and where?"

"Here in my office, tomorrow night at eight."

"That suits me down to the ground, and in the meantime I'll be hustling to see if I can't get on to something more."

It was not a pleasant task Barker had set out to perform. Though he had made his decision without conscious effort, he realized that it meant continued estrangement from the Judge and Irene. If a Blanket Franchise were in contemplation, he understood that it would be the final culmination of the Judge's work on the Fifty Year Franchise Bill, in which his pride and material interests were both involved. Under such circumstances, antagonizing it would intensify his bitterness in the highest degree.

CHAPTER V.

THE FRANCHISE CONTEST BEGINS.

It was decided at the conference not to put themselves in direct antagonism to granting a Blanket Franchise till its provisions were accurately known, but quietly to agitate and put the people on their guard, so that the machinery could be set in motion when the proper time arrived.

The main object to be kept in view was not to permit themselves to be caught napping and allow the franchise to be rushed through, as had been the case with the Fifty Year Franchise Bill, before the people could be aroused to the great importance of such legislation.

In the meantime the reporters were to exert themselves to the utmost to uncover any scheme that might be on foot.

Marston and his newspaper friends at once began the work of interviewing the City Officials and those of the Street Railway management, but at first without much success.

The Mayor and his Cabinet, under strong pressure, denied that any such franchise had been sub-

mitted to them for action. Asked if they did not think that such a movement was in contemplation, they replied, that it was not their business to indulge in suppositions as to what action the Street Railway Company might take.

From these interviews Marston and one of the other reporters repaired to the office of the General Manager of the Street Railway Company.

They were admitted to the office of the Private Secretary, and informed him of their desire to see the Manager.

"Mr. Milligan is very busy just at present, gentlemen, and, as you know, does not like to talk to reporters," he said.

They dropped into chairs, and just then the Private Secretary being called out of the room for some purpose, Marston immediately arose and exclaimed, "Well, I'm not going to give him a chance to turn me down without being heard, I'll beard the lion in his den," and walking across the room, opened the door to the private office and stepped in.

As the door opened, the telephone rang on the Manager's desk, and he, supposing that it was his Private Secretary behind him, took down the receiver and said: "Hello,—yes,—he is speaking.—Yes, well?—What's that? How in the devil did they get on to it?—All right, I'll watch it.—That's right, keep your tongue between your teeth."

Hanging up the receiver sharply, he exclaimed, as he swung himself around, "Well, don't that beat the Devil and Tom Walker?"

Charlie's companion, hearing the telephone ring and not giving a thought to the fact that it might be an extension to another 'phone and knowing the Private Secretary to be absent, took down the receiver purely in a spirit of accommodation to inform the caller of the fact, when the first sound he heard was the manager calling, "Hello," and the following conversation.

"Is the General Manager in?"

"Yes."

"Can I speak to him?"

"He is speaking."

"This is the Mayor."

"Yes, well?"

"The reporters have got on to the Blanket Franchise someway."

"What's that? How in the devil did they get on to it?"

"I haven't any idea, have you? Somebody's been leaking. They didn't get anything from us, but I thought I'd better give you a tip."

"All right, I'll watch it."

"Well, good-bye, Well keep mum."

"That's right, keep your tongue between your teeth."

"What's that, Mr. Milligan, that beats the Devil

and Tom Walker?" inquired Charlie, smiling as if he thought the remark had been addressed to him, as the Manager turned from the 'phone.

He gave him a quick, keen look as he exclaimed, "Who are you, Sir?"

"My name is Marston, Sir. I'm on The Chronicle."

"And how did you get into my office?"

"Your clerk was absent, and as I was in a hurry I just walked in."

"Well, as he still seems to be absent, suppose you just walk out."

"I will do so with pleasure as soon as I ask you a few questions."

"What is it you want to know?"

"Have you prepared a Blanket Franchise for your lines, to be submitted to the Mayor and his Cabinet and the Council?"

"No."

"Do you propose to do so?"

"Are you a stockholder in the road?"

"No, but I have the interest of every citizen in the matter and whatever privileges are granted your corporation must come from the people."

"As you bear no special credentials as their representative, I must decline to give you any information or discuss with you what may be the probable policy of our company in the future."

"You will neither affirm nor deny, then, that

your company contemplates making an application for a Blanket Franchise covering all your lines."

"It is not our desire to say anything about it. We are not responsible for the imaginings or the suppositions of those who are totally unconnected with us."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Milligan, that you are not disposed to give me any direct information, as I will simply have to draw my inferences as to the truth of the rumor from the numerous incidents that seem to corroborate it."

"You have no right to draw such inferences."

"Not even when what you hear beats the Devil and Tom Walker?"

The Manager started and gripped his chair hard for a moment.

"No, not even then, and more especially when only one side of the conversation is heard, and that in a manner not creditable to a gentleman."

Marston stepped forward impulsively while his face flushed a deep red, for a moment, then, laughing lightly and sarcastically, he exclaimed, "Sometimes there are duties forced upon newspaper men, as well as Managers of Street Railways, that impel them to do the things not exactly in accord with the actions of a gentleman."

The Manager was on his feet. "What do you mean by that, Sir?"

"I mean just what I say."

"What do you know about Managers of Street Railways?"

"Not so much as you, but more than you think I know, and more than you would like me to know."

Milligan looked at the speaker with an angry frown for a moment, and then his face cleared and he smiled genially, as grasping his hand and laying the other on his shoulder, he led him towards the door, remarking, "Oh, pshaw, Marston, what's the use of us quarreling? I ought not to have spoken as I did, knowing the nature of your work. Come in and see me sometime when I'm not so cross and not so busy." With a final cordial grasp of the hand, he opened the door and had taken his leave of Charlie before the latter realized how adroitly he had been dismissed.

He found his companion impatiently awaiting him, full to the brim with his discovery which he generously shared with him.

Marston was too well versed in the way of the world to be caught by a little flattery, or good fellowship from a prominent man and he, therefore, prepared a rather sensational article which purported to lay bare the scheme of the City Officials and Street Railway corporation to fasten on the people a franchise that was intended to rob them of their rights.

All the other papers in the city, with one excep-

tion, followed along the same line, but only the "Telegram" contained the telephone conversation between the Mayor and Mr. Milligan.

The concerted publication of these articles attracted great attention and was almost the sole topic of conversation on the streets and throughout the city.

When the reporters were admitted to the presence of the Mayor the next day after the publication, they found him in a very disagreeable mood.

"Well, what is it you want?" he asked gruffly.

Marston, acting as spokesman, said: "We want to ask you, Mr. Mayor, whether the conversation which it is reported that you held with Manager Milligan of the Street Railway Company was correctly reported?"

"I consider such a question a reflection upon me and an insult, Sir."

"We have no desire to insult you, Sir, but are simply anxious to get at the facts. Do you authorize us to deny that such a conversation took place?"

"You can do whatever you please about it. I do not propose to dignify every lie that may be manufactured by some reporter about me with a denial."

"But, Mr. Mayor, heretofore you have never hesitated to deny any generally published statement reflecting upon you, if it was untrue."

"Well, I have reached the limit. I have tried to

treat you reporters as gentlemen, and I get repaid for it in villification and abuse."

"But in this instance my paper did not publish the matter, and is perfectly willing to give space to anything you may write, or authorize me to say in reference to it."

"I tell you I will not dignify the charge by paying any attention to it. I am perfectly willing to answer any legitimate question, but I will not gratify the man who wrote that by considering it worthy of my notice."

"You say you will answer any legitimate question outside of that?"

"Yes, I said so." As he spoke the uneasy look on his face deepened perceptibly.

"Well, then, will you please tell us the object of the conference between you and your Cabinet, Mr. Milligan, Judge Henley, and Joe Hartman at the Bostwick Cafe on last Tuesday night?"

The Mayor looked as if a bomb shell had exploded, as he supposed the knowledge of this meeting had been kept a profound secret. His face went ghastly pale, and his lips were trembling under the hand which he used to steady them. He saw at once the trap he had been led into.

He moistened his lips two or three times with his tongue, and, getting up, walked across the room, then turning, said defiantly: "Who told you there was such a meeting?"

"I don't care to give the name of my informant."

"No, I suppose not. If you did, his reputation as a first-class liar would be so great that no one would believe him. If you want to know what was the subject of the supposed conference, ask your informant. It is as easy to make up a lie about one thing as another."

"Then you deny——"

"I have nothing further to say. Good-day, gentlemen," and, seating himself, the Mayor turned abruptly around to his desk.

CHAPTER VI.

BARKER PERFECTS HIS ORGANIZATION.

Marston was surprised one day to find Barker engaged in looking over a large list of names arranged by wards.

"What are you up to now, Bob?" was Marston's greeting.

"I am trying to arrange things to get in shape for our fight with the Street Car Company."

"Fight? Why it's all over but the shouting. Didn't we do 'em up in great shape?"

"We have done first rate so far, judging from appearances, but I am inclined to think that we started too soon."

"How's that? It looks to me as though they had crawled in their holes and pulled the holes in after them."

"One of the most difficult things in the world, Charlie, is to keep up interest in a question when there is no one to oppose you."

"That's a fact, but if there is no opposition there is no use in keeping up interest."

"I meant no enemy in sight. There is too much at stake to let the matter drop. With a Fifty Year Franchise covering all their lines, their stock would be enhanced in value at least a million, if not three or four million dollars.

"You've got a great head on you, Bob. So that's the reason the reason you are opposed to a Blanket Franchise, is it?"

"No, I'm not opposed to a Blanket Franchise, but I want the people to exact from the Company concessions somewhere near the value of the privileges they are conferring."

"Well, you can bet your bottom dollar, if there's any such stake in it as you say, they're not going to let the thing sleep. Milligan and Hartman are about as smooth as they make 'em, and Judge Henley isn't any slouch either."

"I'm not disposed to underrate their capacity, and that's the reason we want to be prepared for them."

"What's your scheme?"

"I've been busy the past week or two getting the names of those who are active and influential in their respective wards, regardless of politics, whom I thought we could depend on to bring pressure to bear upon the Council and City Administration."

"There's one fellow on the page right in front of you, Jim McCollum, you can't bank on. He be-

longs to the Administration party, and when they go to pouring hot shot into the Mayor, he'll weaken."

"Do you think there will be very many that way?"

"Sure thing! This partisan feeling is so natural to most men, they remind me of the Harvard janitor I heard about. Some man visiting Harvard College came to a building with a Greek inscription over the door, and there being no one else around, he asked the janitor what it meant.

"His answer was, 'I dunno sorr, but I'm thinking it means, 'To Hell wid Yale!'"

Judge Henley, as the principal counsel of the Company, had been requested to prepare a Franchise, covering all their lines. This he had done with great skill, and was anxious to have it introduced and made public at once, but the General Manager would not accede to this until assured that it could be successfully engineered through the Board of Public Works and Council.

Though the Judge chafed considerably under this cautious policy, he was nevertheless greatly incensed at the newspaper charges in reference to their contemplated action.

At the breakfast table on the morning of the day that Barker and Marston were engaged in revising their list of names, the Judge was glancing over his paper when he read the following little paragraph:

"Judge Henley seems to have his ups and downs like ordinary mortals. He dropped his Fifty Year Franchise Bill in the slot and pulled out a Congressional nomination, but when it came to the election, the people said, 'Nay, Nay.' Now his carefully nurtured little Blanket Franchise seems to have died a-bornin', even with the aid of such an accomplished *accoucheur* as Dr. Milligan. The dear people seem to be unappreciative of a good thing when they see it."

The Judge snorted indignantly. "If I had hold of the writer of that, he'd wish he'd died a-bornin'," he exclaimed.

"What's the matter now?" Irene inquired.

"Read that," he said, passing over the paper.

"Well, I wouldn't worry about it, Father. Nobody will pay any attention to it." During this speech, she had risen and, walking round to her father's side, was stroking his hair with one hand while her other arm encircled his neck.

The Judge paid no special attention to her caresses, but it was evident her sympathy was grateful to him.

"I wouldn't mind this little squib this morning," he replied, "if all the papers hadn't been villifying us for the last couple of weeks. If I could get a hold of the instigators of the whole business, I'd make them smart for it."

"Who are they, Father?"

"Why it's that big demagogue, Barker, and that little cad of a Marston. God, how I'd like to get even with that ingrate, Bob Barker."

➤ The hair stroking ceased and the arm around his neck relaxed.

"What makes you think they are responsible for it all?"

"We know it. We have traced the whole thing down to a meeting at his office just at the time when these attacks commenced."

Both her hands now rested on the back of the chair.

"I didn't know that Mr. Barker was a man of so much influence. Does he control all the newspapers in the city?"

"I don't know what he controls, but we can put two and two together; and we know that a day or two after the meeting at his office these stories were published about the conversation with Milligan over the telephone, and the Mayor and his Cabinet, taking dinner with us."

"And were those stories made out of whole cloth?"

"That isn't the point, it's the sneaking, dishonorable thing of tapping a line and of spying on people that I'm talking about."

"Is Mr. Barker accused of doing that? I don't believe it."

"Nobody accuses him of doing it himself, of

course, but some of his henchmen must have done it."

"Then the stories were true after all?"

"Oh, what difference does it make? I'm tired of talking about the matter."

"But I'm anxious to know, Father. Susie Allen and some of the girls asked me about it, and I didn't know what to answer."

"Well, haven't I a right to take dinner with whomever I please?"

"Certainly, that's the reason why I can't see why there should be such a fuss about it, or why it should be kept secret."

"Don't bother your head about it, Irene. There are some things about business matters that you don't understand, and I haven't time to explain." This was said in such a tone as to preclude further discussion.

Had Irene known that the Judge and Milligan had purchased jointly through their brokers nearly a million dollars of the common stock of the Street Railway Company, she could have better understood her father's feelings.

CHAPTER VII.

SUSIE ALLEN PRESCRIBES FOR A SWELLED HEAD.

"Come and take a walk with me, Bob, said Marston, after they had spent an hour or two canvassing their list of names. "You stay too close to your office. What you need is more exercise."

"I believe I will, Charlie. I don't like the way I've been taking on flesh lately."

"You feel all right, do you?"

"Oh, yes, except some of my clothes are a little uncomfortably tight."

"Don't let that worry you; it's a sign of greatness."

"That's consoling, I can afford to get a new suit on that. Is that your opinion as a medical expert, or is based upon observation?"

"Honest injun, Bob. If you were a little fellow like me, you would understand how much physique has to do with success. Why, I might say something really good and no one would pay any attention to it, but let some fellow with a big bay window and a sonorous voice say the same thing or

something not so good and it immediately attracts attention. I tell you there's nothing like a big swell front to give you weight. I mean weight to your words.

"Now take you and me. You're a big fellow, five eleven, and weigh over two hundred; just portly enough to look distinguished; full smooth face, high forehead, good mouth and jaw, and carry yourself as if you owned the earth and the fulness thereof; while I'm a little hundred and thirty-five pound, five-foot-six cuss, and have to wear a mustache to keep people from thinking me a boy. What show have I with you?"

"Yet some of the really greatest men in the world's affairs were very spare, and some of them very small men. But what do you want to turn down this way for?"

"I want to see Alice a moment or two about a little matter."

"You may want to see Alice and she may want to see you, but it's not likely she wants to see me."

"I don't want her to see you too often, but I thought I'd risk it this once. I've tooted your horn to her so much that she thinks Mr. Robert Barker comes very near her ideal, and if she saw very much of him it would soon be 'Good-bye, Charlie.'"

"You've got the jollying business down pretty fine, Charlie," and his hand gripped Marston's shoulder for an instant.

"There is Alice now at the gate and Irene Henley and Susie Allen are with her. Now ain't you glad you came?" Marston asked excitedly.

"I'm not sorry."

"Well you're liable to be if Susie gets a whack at you. Did you ever see a more aggravating little badger?"

"I never gave any thought to her, particularly."

"Don't you fool yourself in thinking she has never given any thought to you. She'll stick the knife into you with the most malicious frankness, or else with the most perfect innocence, you don't know which. Either way, you feel as if you'd like to take and shake her till you jarred her teeth out. But it's funny how she sticks to Alice and Irene."

"There does seem to be a very marked contrast in their appearance and dispositions, and yet that is often the basis of the strongest friendships."

"Well, there's plenty of contrast, if that's all that's necessary. Look at Irene, with her tall, shapely figure, clear cut features, beautiful complexion, ladylike ways and sweet voice, and then look at that little dumpy, red faced, snub-nosed, sharp-voiced Susie."

"Susie wouldn't accuse you of being too complimentary, if she could hear you. Your description seems to fit her pretty well, and yet she's rather an attractive looking girl, too."

"Yes, she is. What's the reason, I wonder?

Sometimes she looks as ugly as sin to me, but at other times she looks real good to me."

By this time they had reached the ladies and were greeted cordially by Alice and Susie, and very politely but rather distantly by Irene.

"I am glad you came, Mr. Barker," said Susie animatedly, as soon as greetings were exchanged; "we were just discussing the Trinity. Irene's a great Unitarian, you know, and I'm a regular Orthodox Methodist, and I just took you folks for an illustration. I said, there's Journalism, Medicine and Law represented. Three in two, you know, and it might be just as well three in one."

"Why didn't you leave me out and say two in one? Then you'd have established two-thirds of your proposition any way."

"Well, I guess I will. What do you say to that, girls?" she asked triumphantly.

Before they could reply, Marston placed his hat on his chest and, bowing low, exclaimed, "I feel greatly honored, Miss Susie, to be used in illustration of a point that has engaged the best minds of the world and is now so lucidly demonstrated."

"Oh, I don't know. If you took off your hat because it was getting too small for your head, you had better put it on again. It isn't everybody that compares you with the Trinity, judging from what I heard this morning."

"You arouse my curiosity. Please, let me hear

it, if you think it will have the effect of preventing my cranium swelling to dangerous proportions."

"I don't suppose I ought to tell you, but I always blurt everything right out. When I drove down town with Papa this morning we met Judge Henley. Your name came up somehow and Papa said it was a pity to spoil a good reporter to make a poor doctor, and the Judge said, 'May God help his patients if he don't make a better doctor than he is a reporter.'" Susie's face was the picture of innocence.

Irene was shocked and embarrassed for the moment. This was followed by indignation, but she simply said sternly, as if addressing an irresponsible child, "Susie!"

Alice, bristling with indignation, exclaimed, "Susie Allen, I have a notion never to speak to you again. You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

Marston's face reddened, and his eyes gleamed for an instant before he resumed his stereotyped smile, and remarked: "I think I can safely put on my hat again without feeling that it's too small."

The constraint which resulted from this little tiff was partially broken by a few commonplace remarks before Irene and Susie took their leave, accompanied by Barker.

They had hardly started when Susie said—"Gee Whillikins, weren't Charlie and Alice mad?"

Irene looked at her frowningly, and Barker re-

plied, "You can hardly blame them; you certainly were a little rough on Charlie."

"I wasn't rough on him at all. He asked me for it, and I gave it to him. Alice is as fussy as an old hen about Charlie. I like him too, that is, I like him when I like him. He can be just as nice as anyobdy when Alice isn't around."

"If you mete out such a penalty to Charlie for being in your good graces, I must consider myself a subject of congratulation that I have never reached that position," Barker remarked smilingly, with a slightly patronizing air.

"Oh, you're in my good graces all right, all right, and if you were to ask me what I'd heard about you, I'd tell you fast enough."

He laughed a little uneasily. "Where ignorance is bliss, yon know, 'tis folly to be wise."

"But nobody thinks you are ignorant, they think you're as wise, as wise, as wise as a serpent, isn't it, or is it Solomon?"

"And as harmless as a dove?" he asked quizzically.

"Oh, I don't know about that; they say you stirred up all this fuss about this bedspread or crazy quilt,—Oh, yes, now I've got it, the Blanket Franchise, isn't it?"

"I've often heard it remarked that 'They say' is very poor authority," he answered rather brusquely, "but did 'They say' give me credit for

having any object in view in stirring up such a fuss?"

"They say you're just a playing ——"

"Playing? What do they mean by that?"

"Well, some say you're playing to get a big retainer out of the Street Car Company, and some say you are just playing for a position in the next campaign, but I said I didn't think ——"

He was looking at her searchingly, and there was something in his look that intimidated Susie, and she hesitated. Waiting a moment, he said, "Did it ever occur to you, Miss Allen, that, if those people who didn't think, didn't talk, that the world would get along just as well and maybe better?"

"Now you are mad. You'd just like to bite my head off, wouldn't you? Papa tells me nearly every time I open my mouth I put my foot in it, and I expect you think the same thing about me, don't you?"

"I wouldn't like to express my opinion, but if such is the case, it doesn't seem to interfere any with your ability to talk."

"No, Papa says I could set my mouth to going and go off and leave it and it would keep right on just the same during my absence."

"And you are proud of the accomplishment?"

"You know I'm not. My mouth is always getting me into trouble, but ever since I was a little baby, whenever I run across a pin-cushion I always

wanted to stick it full of pins, and I've never got over it."

"How about the pin-cushion, does it ever get over it?"

"Of course, it does, why you can't tell where it has been stuck in a little while; the openings all close up. Well, here's where I get off—stop, I mean. Good-bye, Irene. Good-bye, Mr. Barker. I like you, that is, I like you when I like you. Ta, ta."

CHAPTER VIII.

MARSTON TELLS OF HIS DARING RESCUE OF ALICE.

Turning smilingly to Irene, who had remained silent during the conversation, Barker inquired, "Do you like me, Irene, when you like me?"

She colored slightly and answered a little archly, "If I did, you would hardly expect me to make such a frank confession of it."

"They say a frank confession is good for the soul."

"But awhile ago you said, 'They say' was very poor authority."

"Well, I'll change it to 'I say.'"

"That sounds a little egotistical, doesn't it?"

"That may be so, but I can speak with authority for myself, and I can't for others."

"What if there's no confession to make? A confession indicates something that one desires to keep secret; I'm not aware of any such feeling." She concluded her speech in a decidedly freezing tone.

"We used to be such good friends, Irene; I feel sorry that anything should have come between us."

I valued your friendship more than that of anyone else, even, when as a little school girl, I used to help you with your lessons in your father's office."

"Did you?"

"Yes, indeed. Don't you remember how you would come sometimes and perch on the arm of my chair and put your hand over the page of my book and say, 'Throw that nasty old law book away, I want you to help me,' and how meekly I submitted, glad to be tyrannized over by such a sweet little queen."

For a moment the past few weeks were forgotten as the old days were recalled so vividly to her mind.

"Yes, I remember, and how sometimes when you would finally get out of patience with my stupidity and the tears would come to my eyes, how sorry you'd be for me." Her whole face was lighted up now and she laughed a pleasant little laugh while her eyes were glistening with feeling.

"Yes; those were pleasant days. Why can't we be good friends, as we were in the old times, or even a few months ago?"

Her face lost its enthusiasm, and an expression of sadness, not unmixed with coldness, took its place. "But things have changed since then. You used to be a great friend and admirer of Father's, now you seem to antagonize him at every possible opportunity."

"I am still an admirer of your father in many respects, Irene, but matters seem to have so shaped themselves lately that his views and private interests clash with mine. He allows it to affect his personal feelings toward me, but I have no ill feeling toward him, and would be glad, as before, to be on friendly terms with him."

"I appreciate the obligation that we are under to you for the aid you extended him when he was assaulted, and I hope you won't think me ungrateful, but I feel that my first obligation is to Father and I am frank to say that I can hardly reconcile your attitude towards him purely to a sense of duty?"

"You question my motives, then?"

"I don't want to be harsh; but as long as you and he occupy such relations to each other as you do at present, we can only be casual acquaintances; I owe so much loyalty to Father, at least."

They had reached her home by this time. Was it pride or the thought that indifference and coldness would cause her to modify her position that inspired him?

"Very well, Irene," he responded coolly, and raising his hat, added, "Good-bye!"

"Good-bye," was the careless reply, not to be outdone in difference.

As Irene entered the house and began slowly removing her wraps, there were tears in her eyes

and a great sadness in her heart, but she hardly knew whether she was more sorry for herself or angry at Barker. She ascended the stairs to her room languidly, grasping the banisters for support as if fatigued, and resolutely keeping back the tears from overflowing, as if such weakness would be conceding something to Robert.

Barker retraced his steps with a heavy heart after parting with Irene, denouncing himself for his stupidity in forcing the question to an issue.

He was walking along with his head down, oblivious to everything else save his keen feeling of disappointment, when he felt his arm grasped and Marston exclaiming, "What's up? A few minutes ago the sun was shining, the air was bracing and you were stepping high, with your head up, as if you were a length ahead and going easy. Now you look as if you'd been left at the post, or they'd dropped the flag on you."

"You are right, Charlie. I've been left at the post. I suppose I was just warming up when you saw me."

"Well, that's an accident liable to happen to the best of 'em. I never thought you had a yellow streak in you, Bob. Don't lose your nerve, you haven't been knocked out; you're just a little groggy."

"As you didn't witness the contest, you are prob-

ably not a very good judge. It seems to me I've been put clear outside the ropes."

"Don't worry, you'll come again. You may know all about the law, Bob, but you don't know anything about women. The harder they hit you, the more anxious they are to bind up your wounds afterwards. They'll lead you on for awhile, and then just when you think you've got 'em where you want 'em, they'll knife you right in the short ribs."

"I can agree with that last."

"You can bank on it all. They can't help it, it's their nature. They like to keep you on the ragged edge, for they know when they once surrender, it's all day with 'em. It's very seldom a woman ever makes a second declaration of independence."

"You're a good comforter, Charlie."

"That's what I'm here for. Now if you could do Irene some service requiring great presence of mind and bravery that would win her gratitude and admiration, everything would be dead easy; but there are few fellows as lucky as I was in that respect."

"Is that the way you won Alice?"

"What? Didn't you ever hear about it? Since I come to think it over, there was no mention of it in the papers, and I suppose my native modesty prevented my speaking of it."

"I'm listening."

"You know how I hung around Alice for a year or more. Sometimes she was all peaches and cream, and I'd be walking on air; the next time she'd snub me so I'd be so blamed mad at everything I'd go and try to pick a fuss with the City Editor for killing some of my stuff, and get a chance to work off the pressure that way."

"Well, you remember the big Street Fair or Carnival we had last year? It seems that Alice and Susie and a few of the girls had made up a party and for a lark went to the Fair together without any escort. Of course, they knew it wasn't exactly the thing to do but it was just unconventional and wicked enough to have a charm about it.

"I was wandering around in a disconsolate mood, when I heard a weird sort of cry coming from the 'end of the 'Midway' that chilled my blood. 'Look out for H-O-L-Y M-O-S-E-S. Look out for H-O-L-Y M-O-S-E-S!'

"Though I was not sure whether it was some sort of religious ceremony or some great danger threatening the people, being naturally courageous, nothing daunted, I made my way in the direction from which the sound came.

"I was admitted on my dead-head ticket into the 'Streets of Cairo,' where I found a swarthy Arab leading a long-necked, long-legged camel upon which were seated two young ladies, while the

Arab, as he marched through the crowd, kept chanting, 'Look out for H-O-L-Y M-O-S-E-S!'

"You know how those long-legged things shut themselves up like a jack knife when they kneel down, and, when they rise with their unearthly groaning, it feels to persons on their backs as if they were going down a steep roller-coaster incline. I worked my way round to the starting-point after a while, just as Alice seated in front and Susie behind were getting ready to start. The girls were laughing so they could hardly contain themselves, and were careless about holding on, so that, when the camel reared himself on his hind feet suddenly, with a horrible groan, Alice was thrown forward as if from a catapult.

"With rare presence of mind and unparalleled bravery, I sprang forward and caught her in my arms. She was not entirely unconscious, and as she shuddered and looked up in my face, she said in a voice hardly above a whisper, 'H-O-L-Y M-O-S-E-S!'

"I assured her that was not my name, and that she was still a resident of this mundane sphere, when she shook herself loose from my protecting embrace and exclaimed, 'I wasn't thinking about you, I was thinking about the camel.'

"Having no wish for notoriety and not desiring to remain there to be lionized by the crowd as a hero, I took occasion to inform Alice, aside, that I

would call on her the following evening to give her a fitting opportunity to thank me for saving her life, and quietly took my leave. There is not much else to tell. I could not refuse to accept the devotion and gift of a life I had so daringly rescued, and you know the rest."

"A very thrilling story, Charlie; I hardly know which to admire the most, the intrepid bravery that led you right into the midst of danger, or the excessive modesty you have shown in keeping your great achievement a secret from the world."

"Don't mention it, Bob. Virtue, as you know, is its own reward. I only broke my silence now in order to give you a pointer on how to rescue a fair damsel in distress."

"But there isn't any Street Fair now."

"That's a fact, but be on the *qui vive* for anything that turns up, there's whole lots of ways."

"I suppose it would be necessary for her to be on hand at the same time, wouldn't it?"

"Well, yes, since I come to think of it, that's a point it isn't well to overlook."

CHAPTER IX.

ADVERTISING SUBSIDY.

Nearly three weeks passed without any apparent move by the Company to press the Franchise matter. As Marston expressed it, "There's nothing doing."

How badly founded was this belief was made evident by a visit which Carson, the managing editor of the "Chronicle," received from General Manager Milligan.

Milligan was a well groomed, finely proportioned man, of pleasing address. He had the air which marks the prosperous, successful man of affairs, while his dark hair, white mustache and ruddy cheeks produced such a blending of youth and age as to give him a peculiarly distinguished look. More richly endowed than some men, he had a dual conscience—a private conscience which compared well with that of his church member associates and a corporation conscience that could adapt itself to every business emergency.

After greeting and shaking hands with Carson in the most cordial manner, he drew his chair up

to the former's desk and remarked, "Neither of us has any time to spare, Carson, and I'll get down to the object of my business at once."

For answer Carson nodded his head and looked at him enquiringly, but there was nothing in the look to give Mr. Milligan the impression that he had any special anxiety to hear him unbosom himself.

The Railway Manager was evidently not quite at ease, and began expatiating at some length as to what his Company desired to accomplish; finally breaking off abruptly to exclaim, "Look here, Carson, isn't your paper run for the purpose of making money? Didn't your stockholders invest in it as a business proposition, rather than as a matter of sentiment?"

"I suppose you have about hit it on both propositions, Mr. Milligan," was the reply.

"I thought so. That is the principle upon which our Company and every other well conducted enterprise is run."

"Well, and what then?"

"Simply this, we want you to stop roasting us on this Blanket Franchise proposition and withdraw your opposition to it. If you will do this, we will pay you fifteen thousand dollars for the publication of such matter in connection with the Franchise as we may furnish you."

"You are laboring under a very grievous error,

Mr. Milligan, if you think our editorial columns are for sale at any price," Carson answered heatedly.

"I am not trying to buy your editorial expressions," Milligan rejoined suavely and soothingly, laying his hand on the editor's knee. "I am making you a straight business proposition, to pay so much for certain space in your columns and all we ask is that you will let your readers judge as to the value of the wares we advertise."

"But ——" Carson began impulsively.

"Wait a moment, let me finish," Milligan interrupted. "If a merchant advertises in your paper, you do not consider it a part of your duty to examine his stock and see whether the bargains advertised are genuine. We do not seek to control your word of mouth in the slightest degree or to restrict you in the least in giving the news in reference to any phase of this question that may arise; the only condition that we would like to impose is that there be no adverse comments or deductions on the part of those reporting it."

"That would be stultifying ourselves and the paper."

"Is your paper willing to donate fifteen thousand dollars towards antagonizing a Franchise which is in the interest of both the people and our Company?"

"But if it is not in the interest of the people, it

ought to be opposed at whatever cost," Carson responded. "And ——"

Milligan interposed hastily, fearing Carson was going to commit himself irrevocably. "There is a regularly elected body to look after the interests of the people. It is not asking too much, is it, to let them do their duty to their constituents, to whom they are responsible, as they see fit, without any undue pressure from outside sources?"

"All that sophistry sounds very nice, Mr. Milligan, but it don't go down with me, and I want to say to you, right now, that the only way the 'Chronicle' is for sale, is at two cents a copy, after it comes off the press." Carson had risen in his excitement and his eyes were shining with honest wrath.

Milligan reached over and plucked him by the coat. "Oh, pshaw, Carson, you're getting clear off your base. There is no buying about it. Sit down now and be reasonable. If I had wanted to buy anyone, I would have made the offer a personal one. It is merely asking you to do your duty and treat us fairly, and, if you do so, we will give your paper so much advertising patronage."

"I don't want to be rough with you, Milligan," the editor replied, with difficulty restraining his temper, "but you might talk a week and it would not change my views."

"Now, see here, Carson, what's the use of being

so damned contrary?" the railroad magnate exclaimed impatiently. "All the other papers are reasonable and have agreed to give us a fair show. Come now," and he placed his hand coaxingly on Carson's shoulder, "why can't you do the same?"

Carson shifted his shoulder from under the hand and shook his head. "I would like to fix up this business with you, Carson," continued the General Manager, "but if I can't arrange it with you, I will have to see the President and have him call a meeting of the Board. What do you say, is it a go?"

"No, it's not a go with me," was the decisive reply. "But it will not be necessary for you to see the President, I will have him call a meeting of the Board tomorrow."

"All right, just as you say. I haven't any ill-will toward you, and I don't like to go over your head, but business is business, you know."

"Yes, I know, but your conceptions of business and mine are entirely different," was the rejoinder, with a quiet, contemptuous smile.

"Well, we can't all think alike. Good-bye." As his hand was on the door-knob, he hesitated and said, "Maybe, I haven't sized you up just right, Carson. Now if a personal consideration ——" Carson strode towards him with a dangerous expression on his face. "No? All right. Good day," and the door closed rather hurriedly behind him.

Scarcely an hour had passed after the interview

when Barker and Marston, in response to a telephone message, joined Carson in his office.

"What's up, Carson?" Marston asked as soon as they arrived. "It must be something important when you call in counsel two such distinguished gentlemen as Barker and myself."

"To use one of your favorite expressions, Charlie, 'it looks as if were up agin it,'" Carson answered.

"Agin what?"

"The Street Railway Company. It has already bribed the other papers, and a desperate effort is to be made to do the same with the 'Chronicle.' There is to be a meeting of the Board of Directors tomorrow to decide whether it will be accepted."

"Look here, Carson, I am up to a good many of these boodling games, but you surely can't expect me to believe that a body of reputable business men would hold an official meeting to decide whether they will accept a bribe or not?"

"That's just what they are going to do," Carson replied. "Of course, they wouldn't construe it in that light, but its a bribe just the same, and there's grave danger that it will be accepted," and he proceeded to enlighten them as to the proposition.

"What makes you think the Directors will accept?" Marston asked at the conclusion of Carson's recital.

"Several of them are stockholders in the Street

Railway, while others are interested in the Gas, Electric Light, and Telephone companies, all of which are working the city for franchises, or getting ready to, and they will all naturally hang together."

"It will make it very unpleasant to have to conduct the paper on lines you are opposed to," Barker remarked.

"I won't do it, I'll throw up my job first."

Marston grasped the hand of the managing editor. "Shake, Carson, them's my sentiments. What's your plan? You know you can bank on me to the limit."

"I think with what stock I own and can control, I can muster about forty per cent. and my object will be to get a majority of it with me."

"Mr. Claybourne is a stockholder, isn't he?" Barker asked.

"Yes, he holds about fifteen per cent. of it."

"Did you count his among the forty per cent. you think will be with you?"

"No."

"Why do you think he will be against you?"

"I think he will be indifferent rather than against me. He is a large manufacturer, you know, and devotes his whole attention to his business. This newspaper stock is merely a side issue with him. He took it more to accommodate Mr. Harwood than anything else, and has been letting

him vote it. Harwood will almost certainly be against us on this proposition, and I take it for granted will vote Claybournes stock as usual."

"He has always been friendly towards you?"

"Exceedingly so, the few times I have met him."

"I believe he will stand by you in this matter if it is properly presented to him. I have no special acquaintance with him, but I met him incidentally the other evening, and he laughingly remarked: 'I understand, Barker, you are causing our Street Railway friends considerable uneasiness.'"

"I don't know as to that,' I replied, 'but I'm anxious to make as good terms as possible for the people.'

"'And I hope you will succeed,' he said. 'With the increased and ever increasing facilities for transportation, there should be a very material reduction in the rates during the next two or three decades.'"

"He then went on to recite several instances in which the Street Railway fare was a marked item in the expenses of some of his workmen of small earning capacity, and what a blessing it would be to them if a material reduction in this expense could be made."

"That certainly sounds encouraging."

"It makes us solid, I tell you," Charlie chimed in. "I know Claybourne and he's a white man through and through. There is not another em-

ployer in the city, if in the state, so considerate of his men. He don't like to take part in any public controversy; but if we can show him just how the land lies before he's committed to the other side, I'll bet my head he'll be with us heart and soul."

"If that's the case, the sooner we act the better," said Barker, and the conference resulted in their immediately repairing to the office of Mr. Claybourne.

They were received very cordially by that gentleman, as was his custom, and after passing around the cigars and seeing they were comfortably seated, he settled back in his chair with the remark: "Well, gentlemen, now I am ready to listen to you. I know you must have something important to say to me," he added smilingly, "or you wouldn't have honored me with this visit."

Carson presented the object of their call, occasionally aided by interjections from Barker and Marston.

They were listened to with the most serious attention and at the conclusion, Mr. Claybourne, said: "You were right, gentlemen, in supposing that I would be interested in this matter, and also in your belief that my sympathy would be with the people in this contest. I shall see not only that my stock is voted right, but will be there to use my personal influence in the same direction."

CHAPTER X.

MARSTON MAKES A SCOOP.

True to his promise, Mr. Claybourne was present at the Board meeting the next day and nobly seconded Carson's efforts. It was a battle royal, and there was much feeling displayed on both sides, but the Carson faction was victorious.

Evidence was not lacking the next few days that two of the other papers had undergone a miraculous change of heart.

Our three friends meeting to discuss the matter the day after the Board meeting, Barker enquired of Carson, "Were these other papers that were apparently actively in sympathy with us in the start honest, or not?"

"In the beginning of the fight I think they were not censored in the slightest degree, and the controlling powers permitted their papers to take the course they did, so that it would be an object for the Street Railway Company to get them to withdraw their opposition. We don't bribe our friends."

"In other words, it was a regular hold-up?"

"That's about the size of it."

"Did you get on to the time when this Franchise is going to be sprung on us, Carson?" asked Marston.

"Not definitely; but from some little expression that Milligan dropped, I believe it is already in the hands of the Board of Public Works."

"Then we've got to get a hustle on us all along the line, for Milligan feels towards the councilman like the old darky woman said her husband did about the chickens."

"How was that?"

"He will hab 'em eben ef he has toh buy 'em."

"I guess you are not far wrong on that, Charlie," Barker remarked seriously, "but it is our business to see that he does not get a majority of them."

"When you get ready to move, say the word," Carson exclaimed, "and the 'Chronicle' will be right in line."

"What's the first thing to do?" asked Marston.

"We must find out definitely whether the thing has yet been submitted to the Board of Public Works and the exact provisions which it contains," Barker replied.

"Charlie, you better take that assignment right away," remarked Carson.

"All right, if you say so, but you know the Mayor is dead set against me, and won't give anything to me if he can help it."

"I know that, but he has a rather wholesome fear of you, too, and knows you'll roast him to the Queen's taste if it transpires he's holding up on you, so I think you'd better tackle him."

Marston had some difficulty in gaining admittance to the Mayor, being informed by the Private Secretary that he was engaged and could not be seen.

"Oh, I'm a very patient man," was the careless reply as he sank resignedly into a chair, "a few hours don't count much with me."

"It's not likely he'll see you today, Marston, he has appointments that will take up all his time."

"You make me tired, Ramsey, I'm too old a bird to work a bluff of that kind on. I came to see the Mayor and I expect to see him; you can make your mind easy on that."

"I'll see what I can do."

"That's a good boy. I'll let you go up higher when I'm Mayor."

In a few moments, holding the door open, he announced: "The Mayor will see you for a minute."

The Mayor remained seated as his visitor stepped in, and simply nodded coldly without speaking.

"Good morning, Mr. Mayor," said Marston cheerily.

"Good morning, Sir."

"I desired to have a little talk with you, Mayor."

"I can't say that the desire is mutual."

"Oh, well, everything is one sided in this world. No, I'll take that back, I mean there are two sides to everything."

The Mayor made no reply, but still continued to gaze coldly and expectantly at him, while drumming on the arms of his chair with his fingers.

"Can I ask you a few questions?" he asked, seeing that he was not inclined to give him an opening.

"You may ask, but I don't promise to answer," was the response.

"Well then, I should like to know whether the Blanket Franchise proposition has been submitted to you yet?"

"I have no desire to discuss that question with you."

"I'm not asking you to discuss the question, Mr. Mayor, I am simply asking for information, one word, yes or no, will suffice to answer the question."

"I have no information which I desire to impart to you on that or any other question. You have hounded and misrepresented me so that you are entitled to no courtesy at my hands."

"Look here, Mayor, a man hasn't any business in public life that can't stand the gaff a little occasionally. You expect that when you enter it. Now you are a public official and are the servant of the

people who elected you, and I am a reporter of a newspaper whose business it is to furnish news to the people. It isn't a personal matter with me, and you have no right to make it so on your part."

"It's a great pity the people were so obtuse that they could not appreciate your good qualities sufficiently to make *you* Mayor, you are so free with your suggestions as to his duty."

"They might have gone farther and fared worse, but that has nothing to do with the case. Am I to get the information or am I not?"

There was an implied threat in the tone.

"I haven't decided yet what I'll do. You have expressed yourself pretty freely about duties of public officials and about there being no personal feeling in what you have written in reference to me. Now I want to say to you, no public man can so divorce himself from his personality that he can be criticized without its hurting him, and you have been one of the bitterest critics I have had. It's a wonder to me somebody hasn't done you up before this. I want to tell you right now, I won't stand for it any longer."

"I may have been a little rough on you Mayor in regard to your public acts, but heretofore I have let your private affairs scrupulously alone. Now some men when they had found out that some of your creditors were getting ready to raise sheol about your private debts during the last mayorality

campaign, and that they were settled by a certain man who was the agent of the Street Railway Company, who took receipts for several thousand dollars, would have rushed right off and published the whole business, but that was your private affair, and I didn't meddle with it."

The Mayor sat and glared at him for a moment, and then blurted out, "I'm not responsible for all the damned lies you hear."

"No, no, of course not." And then very thoughtfully, "Do you think you can give me the public information I am after?"

"What do you want?"

"I want to know whether the Blanket Franchise has been submitted to you and if it has, I want to see it or know its provisions."

He turned and unlocking a drawer, drew a package of typewritten matter from it, and laying it on his desk, said: "Here it is."

"When is it to be reported to the council?"

"Next week, I suppose. It's in the hands of myself and Director of Law, as a sub-committee of the Board of Public Works, for revision, and will be acted upon by the full Board in a day or two."

"Do you expect any substantial changes will be made?"

"No."

"Thank you, Mayor."

Marston ran through it hastily and made notes of all the salient features; when he had finished,

he remarked, "I might as well notify you, Mayor, that we're going to fight this thing from the word 'Go.'"

"I supposed you would, but you're going to leave me out of it, aren't you?"

"As long as you play square, I'll not attack you, except in your public capacity, but if I find out anything crooked, I'll roast you alive."

"I tell you I've been straight in the matter, Marston, but you know how I'm fixed, and I believe it's as good terms as we can get."

"We'll see about that. It'll be up to the council next week, and, if it goes through that way, the members that vote for it will have to change their residence; you mark what I say." And as he left the Mayor, that gentleman had a look on his face which indicated that his lot was not a happy one.

That Marston was pleased goes without saying, for he had not only succeeded in securing the information desired, but had also a "scoop" on all the other papers.

CHAPTER XI.

PUBLIC SENTIMENT IS EXPRESSED.

The Anti-franchisers on learning the provisions of the Franchise ordinance, immediately made arrangements for the holding of meetings in each ward of the city. The first was to be held in Barker's own ward, it being suspected that his Councilman was a creature of the Company.

Shortly before the time of the meeting, Marston came into Barker's office with a long face. "We might as well call our meeting off, Bob," he said dejectedly. "They've got the cards stacked on us."

"What do you mean?"

"I've just got it straight from a friend of mine, one of the employes, that two hundred street car men under one of the foremen are to be there. They don't want to do it, of course, but they have to or lose their jobs. But the worst of it is that the notorious Dick Walker with one hundred hired toughs from Hell's Half-Acre is to be on hand. They propose to pack the meeting and run it. Not more than five hundred men can get into Reeves' Hall, and you see they will have the majority on us."

"My God, Marston, are the people going to allow the Company to use but a tithe of the money filched from them in one year, to bribe and intimidate them to stand and be robbed for a life time?"

Barker sprang to his feet as he gave utterance to this impassioned speech, but as his excitement died down his countenance took on an aspect of stern determination and there was the light of battle in his eyes as he enquired: "How about Poston, the man who has been selected for chairman, has he got plenty of courage?"

"He's one of the nerviest little cusses in the city. If we had a few more like him there wouldn't be any bulldozing."

Barker strode to a file case and selected a number of pamphlets, which he placed in his pockets and turning said: "Come on, Charlie, there will be something doing I think before that crowd runs away with our meeting."

The hall was packed to its utmost limit, through the encouraging efforts of Barker and Marston, so that the intruders were not so greatly in the majority as they had anticipated. Many of the Anti-franchisers had also been fortunate enough to get well in front.

The speaking was closed by Barker, and though there were a number of interruptions by his opponents and some impertinent questions asked re-

flecting on his judgment and integrity, no overt act was committed.

A Committee on Resolutions was appointed by the Chair, which soon brought in a report Condemning the Blanket Franchise and requesting their councilman to vote against it. In addition, a demand was made for a straight three cent fare in lieu of six tickets for a quarter and a straight five cent fare for transfers, as provided in the proposed ordinance. It was also demanded that the Franchise should run but twenty-five instead of fifty years, together with a distinct surrender of the claims of the Company to a Perpetual Franchise on all the lines which the ordinance proposed to cover.

After the debate had closed, Barker made a motion that the vote on the resolutions should be taken by ballot. There were some noisy objections to this at first by the hirelings of the Company, but thinking that they had the matter in their own hands in any event, the motion was allowed to pass.

Then Barker made his "coup." "I arise, Mr. Chairman," he said, "to make a parliamentary enquiry and to secure a ruling from the Chair. In the published call for this meeting it stated that it was for the purpose of securing an expression of the voters of the Twelfth Ward. If I state the matter correctly, then, I desire to ask the Chairman whether any other than legal voters of this Ward are entitled to a voice in this meeting?"

The Chairman was equal to the occasion and without hesitation responded, "The Chair will state that the gentleman is not only right in his statement of facts in regard to the call, but also in his conclusions as to those who are entitled to a voice in the proceedings."

At this ruling of the Chair, pandemonium at once arose in the hall, but the Chairman, ever cool and collected, kept rapping with his gavel until partial order was restored.

Then Dick Walker, the leader of the gang of tough characters, shrieked, "I appeal from the decision of the Chair."

The Chairman smilingly responded, "The ruling of the Chair is so self-evidently correct that it declines to submit an appeal from its decision, to be voted upon by those whom it has just ruled are not entitled to vote."

The opposition was frantic for a few moments, and then, regaining his wits, Walker sprang upon a chair and shaking his fist at the Chairman, shouted, "We are all citizens of this Ward, Sir, and by God we're going to vote, and we'd like to know who's going to prevent it?"

Barker rose again quietly and remarked: "Mr. Chairman, I am glad to hear that the gentleman and his friends are citizens of the Ward, and in order that there may be no mistake as to the right of anyone to vote, I have here the registration

lists of the Twelfth Ward," holding them aloft, "and I suggest that no one be allowed to cast his ballot until the Secretary has first ascertained whether his name is inscribed on these lists as a legal voter. I am anxious that every one who is entitled to vote shall have that privilege," and here he expanded apparently to giant proportions and, turning, he transfixed Walker with a glance as sharp and glittering as polished steel, while his voice swelled till it almost shook the ceiling. "And I want to say to you, Sir, that By God! *I'll* prevent any man from voting that is not entitled to."

A profound silence followed this declaration for a moment, and then the Anti-franchisers with one accord gave vent to cheers and every manner of applause, while many cried out, "That's the talk"—"We'll stand by you, Barker!" and like expressions until the Chairman securing order, said: "The proposition of the gentleman is an eminently fair one, and the Chair will act upon his suggestion as to the use of the registration lists."

The street car men were at best only half-hearted in the support of the Company, and the hired toughs seeing that the Anti-franchisers were determined to protect their rights at any hazard, left the room in a body, loudly proclaiming as they did so, against the injustice which they insisted had been done them, while the balloting proceeded almost unanimously in favor of the resolutions.

The decisive action taken at this first meeting put an end to what had evidently been a carefully prepared scheme to either run or break up the meetings which were called to protest against the Blanket Franchise.

The "Chronicle" gave up a great portion of its space to interviews, editorials, and special articles upon the question, while the subsidized sheets devoted many columns each day to arguments from paid attorneys and expressions from leading bankers and capitalists, sustaining the position of the Company.

Public sentiment was at fever heat, and nearly every organization in the city except the Board of Trade passed resolutions condemning the Franchise, which were transmitted to Council. Time had been secured to take action, by Barker's obtaining a temporary restraining order to prevent the Board of Public Works reporting the ordinance to Council, on the ground that it was in contravention of public policy.

Barker was thoroughly immersed in the fight, and, besides speaking from one to three times every night, directed the work of all the forces of the Anti-franchisers.

As the culminating effort of the campaign, a call for a great mass meeting of the citizens at the Auditorium was issued, to be held under the auspices of "The Chronicle" to discuss the Blanket

Franchise and give expression to public sentiment. Special invitations were issued to the Mayor and his Cabinet and to the City Council.

It was arranged that both sides should have a hearing at this meeting through spokesmen of their own selection.

CHAPTER XII.

SOME LEGAL PROPOSITIONS.

Irene, hearing her father express himself day after day in the most positive terms upon the contest that was being waged, naturally imbibed his views. The little she read upon the subject were articles to which the Judge called her attention, from men of recognized moral and high financial standing, and she was impressed with the idea that the opposition was largely composed of the rabble of the city.

Thousands of people who lift up their voices in holy horror against men guilty of grand larceny on a petty scale, honor and revere the men who are guilty of petty larceny, from the public, on a grand scale.

The Judge was unsparing in his denunciation of Barker. It hurt Irene to hear him thus criticized, and occasionally she made some feeble defense of him, yet was conscious of a feeling of resentment towards him for antagonizing a measure upon which her father's heart seemed so strongly set.

Mr. Milligan, the General Manager, was a fre-

quent visitor at the Henley home, and he and the Judge sometimes conversed in Irene's presence almost as freely as if she were not there. On one occasion Milligan remarked, "That man Barker is the brains and energy of the opposition. If we could call him off in some way, the whole business would fall down."

"He's got brains enough and energy enough, I suppose," the Judge said grudgingly, "but he delights so much in that kind of demagoguery that I don't see how you're going to shut him off; besides, he hates me so, he'll fight us for spite, if for nothing else."

"Oh, pshaw, Judge, Barker isn't worrying about you; he's got an object in view of some kind, and we want to make it an object for him to let up on us; there's some way to get at him, and I'll find it."

"I don't see how you'll do it."

"We got Morse and we got Garrison; you know they were rampant against us awhile ago."

"Yes, but Morse and Garrison are not Barker."

"I know that, but he's made of the same kind of material and is amenable to the same kind of arguments. I knew that Barker was pretty strong in a speech or argument, but I had no suspicion that he was such an organizer. Why, he's got the people worked up till they're half crazy, and some of our men are getting weak-kneed. I believe they're afraid they'll be mobbed."

"I'd like to take the wind out of his sails. What do you propose to do if you can't reach him in that way?"

"Oh, I've got something up my sleeve; I'll work him some way."

"Maybe you can, but I won't believe it till I see it."

So earnest had the Judge and Milligan become in their discussion that they had virtually ignored, or had forgotten, Irene's presence.

She had taken little interest in the conversation at first, but as it turned upon Robert, she became so eager to hear and gather the import of what they were saying that she strained forward to listen.

It was with a voice somewhat tense and constrained in her effort to keep it steady that she asked, "Do you think it exactly honorable, Mr. Milligan, to endeavor to influence Mr. Barker in the way you suggest?"

Both the men started, and a heavy frown of displeasure settled on the Judge's face, while for a moment the crafty Railway Manager looked embarrassed.

"You had better attend to your own affairs, and not mix in with business you don't understand?" the Judge answered harshly. "What is it to you? You are not the custodian of Bob Barker's honor?"

Irene flushed painfully at this rebuke and the

sneering inference that accompanied it, but Mr. Milligan came to her rescue gallantly. "Now look here, Judge," he said, "you are not in this thing. Miss Irene spoke to me and it isn't fair to double up on her."

Then turning to Irene. "I hope you will not get a wrong impression about this matter. There was no thought in my mind of trying to debauch Mr. Barker. But I believe if I could have a little private talk with him, I could make him see things in a different light."

Irene was silenced, but was left with an uneasy feeling that there was something sinister in the suggestion, which had called out her protest.

For ways that are dark and tricks that are, not always vain, the public grafter is peculiar.

Of the two kinds of graft—plain and legal, the latter is much the more demoralizing to the people. The legal graft, though not patented, seems to have been invented for the benefit of those who have a horror of the penitentiary and who desire to stand well in the estimation of their fellowmen.

The plain grafter when divorced from his graft starts a saloon or gambling joint or goes to prison, but the legal grafter when pried loose from his graft, still passes the contribution plate in church, with his halo undisturbed, and is particularly eligible as director in speculative corporations.

Marston in speaking of these men, remarked in

his characteristic style, "Why, they're regular hypnotizers of the public conscience, they can hold up a saving of five thousand dollars in the water works so prominently before the eyes of the public, that it blinds them to the hundred thousand or million dollars steal that they are getting away with on the sewer contracts, or a public franchise.

"The moral that these smooth grafters seem to draw from this is: Always be a legal grafter; it is less dangerous, more respectable and most profitable."

As Marston was leaving the City Hall the day following the scene with Irene and Milligan, he was accosted by Hartman, the Street Railway lobbyist, with a laughing "Hello, Charlie. Off on another interviewing lay are you?"

"That's what," Marston replied genially.

"Well, you're certainly earning your money. They merely instruct you to go out and find how the people feel on this Franchise proposition don't they, and interview those who will consent to be quoted?"

"You've got my orders down pat, Hartman."

"I thought so; now all we ask is a fair show, and I'm willing to make it an object for you to treat us fair," he said in a half jovial manner, laying his hand familiarly on Marston's shoulder.

"What do you mean by that? I have published

quite a number of interviews from people favorable to the Street Railway Company."

"I know you have," was the reply in a slightly accusing tone, "but you seem to take good care not to run across many of our friends. Now, I will give you a hundred dollars a week for the next month, if you will go and interview the men whose names I'll give you from time to time. They are all representative business men, too, who are entitled to be heard. That's a perfectly fair proposition. I don't want to interfere with your regular work, you can go ahead interviewing as many people as you please. All I ask is, that you sandwich the talks with the men I designate in with your other matter."

Marston hesitated slightly, and there was an uncertain tone in his voice as he replied: "But the policy of the 'Chronicle' is in opposition to your Company, Hartman. You've got your own newspapers, and it's their business to look after your side of the fight and ours to take care of our side."

"That won't do, Charlie. You know I'm not asking you for anything but a square deal. You are claiming to run your paper on the God-Almighty-highly-moral plane, and if you're honest you can't refuse to do as I ask. Both sides are entitled to a fair hearing. Come now, that's a good fellow, don't be so damned finicky. A square deal and the Devil take the hindmost. Is it a go?"

That he who hesitates is lost is not always true. There was no uncertain ring in the words or Marston's expression, as he responded, "I like you all right, Hartman, but I haven't any too much respect for you, and I don't want you to try any more of your games on me. I'm in earnest, and if you say another word to me on the subject I'll publish the whole business, and there'll be a mix up between you and me besides."

Hartman was surprised, mad, and disgusted. "Well, if you want to make all kinds of a fool of yourself, go ahead," he rejoined. "You'll find out you've been tearing your clothes for nothing. When the vote comes, we won't do a thing to you. When you talk about publishing what I said, that don't scare me a little bit. You don't think I'd be idiotic enough to acknowledge it, do you? Or, if I did, I'd say I was just kidding you and make you look silly."

At nearly the same hour Barker received a visit from Mr. Milligan.

"You are probably surprised to receive a call from me, Barker," he remarked, after exchanging the ordinary civilities, "but I dropped in to see if you were still engaged in the practice of law."

"Yes, I still do a little in that line," Barker answered pleasantly.

"I am glad to hear that, for I have considerable admiration for your legal ability."

"Thank you, Mr. Milligan, I know of no one who is more capable of judging a man's legal capacity."

"Well, that's my honest opinion, and as our Company always tries to secure the best legal talent obtainable, I came to see if I could retain your services in a matter of great importance to us."

"What is the nature of the service?"

"I want your opinion on this Perpetual Franchise business, and am prepared to give you any retainer that is at all within the bounds of reason."

"Let us understand each other, Mr. Milligan. Do you want me to give my legal opinion on the merits of the case, or do you want me to prepare a brief favoring your side of the contention?"

"It is hardly necessary to ask that question. We have fully determined to fight for our rights of perpetuity in these franchises. We are prepared to offer you a fee of five thousand dollars, and would of course expect the very best service you could render us."

"The fee which you offer me, Mr. Milligan, is very many times larger than any I ever received, but I cannot accept it under those circumstances."

"Why not? It is a purely business proposition. You are engaged in the practice of law for a livelihood. I have to learn yet that lawyers can engage only in such cases as they conscientiously believe to be right. Why even the courts recognize that attorneys are under no obligations to be governed

by such motives, and appoint men of the highest character and talent to defend the most notorious criminals."

"That is very true, but the intent of the court is not to furnish means for these men to escape the just punishment of the law, but to zealously protect any rights they may possess."

"And why are we not entitled to the best counsel we can secure to protect zealously any rights we *we* may possess?"

"Possibly you may be, but there is a moral as well as a material side to the profession of law and they cannot be disassociated by any species of sophistry. As it is, I have espoused the side of the people and cannot honorably recede from it."

"I have no desire to appear offensive or impertinent, but that seems to me all 'bosh.'"

"From your standpoint it probably is 'bosh'; from mine it seems the only honorable course to pursue, and any other would put me in an entirely inconsistent position."

"Well, we don't want to make it too difficult for you. We can appreciate the fact that it would place you in a rather embarrassing attitude, and all we'll ask is, that you prepare us a brief on the matter and simply keep quiet, if you don't want to come out in the open."

"I have tried to treat you courteously, Mr. Milligan," said Barker, rising from his chair and gazing

at him sternly, "as is due from one gentleman to another in discussing a business proposition. Your last expression, however, is sufficient evidence that you are trying to buy my influence rather than to obtain my legal services, and I want you distinctly to understand that I am not for sale at any price, and the sooner this interview is ended the better it will please me."

Milligan paled, flushed, and cowered in his chair; then started up angrily, but, restraining himself, was smiling in his quiet, imperturbable manner by the time Robert had finished.

"Now you're going off half-cocked, Barker. I was honest in my reference to your legal ability, and of course I'd like to secure, or at least to nullify your influence if I could. Don't you constantly reiterate how much saving a reduction in fare will effect to the average family and how many comforts this amount will procure for them? Isn't that an appeal to their selfishness, and doesn't it have ten times more effect in rallying the people to your side than all your arguments from a purely ethical point of view? Then, why haven't we a right to appeal to the strongest sentiment in all mankind,—self-interest?

"You are a man of modest means, isn't it unjust and absurd to ask you to contribute five thousand dollars toward securing certain concessions in the interest of the public? And that is what you are

virtually doing if you reject my offer. It is true you might be subject to some criticism, but how many of those who would criticize you the most harshly would contribute a dollar to reimburse your loss? Not many, I assure you."

"I do not suppose that one man in a hundred who commits a crime fails to justify himself by some process of plausible reasoning, but *you* know, and *I* know, that such a course as you suggest is not consistent with honor."

"Then you are determined not to make any concessions in this matter?"

"Certainly not, and I feel that I ought as an honorable man, as soon as I ascertained the purpose of your call, to have ordered you from my office, and assisted your going. The only thing that restrained me is the knowledge that there are some men who have such a peculiar code of honor that certain things seem perfectly legitimate to them that are absolutely revolting to other men."

"Very fine, very fine," Milligan exclaimed sarcastically, "I am glad to see that you've at least got enough sense not to offer me any such indignity as you suggest. I came to you with a perfectly legitimate business proposition, you chose to reject it. All I ask now is that you regard our interview as strictly confidential."

"I will not promise that, Mr. Milligan, but I shall not give it to the public, though I probably ought

20 *A. T. Jones*

"I am now standing to the east and nothing I
know of will be the same."

"I am now standing to the east and nothing I
know of will be the same. I am now standing
to the east and nothing I know of will be the
same. I am now standing to the east and nothing
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same."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MASS MEETING AT THE AUDITORIUM.

In preparing for the great mass meeting Carson had arranged that the principal addresses of the evening were to be delivered by Barker, on the part of the people, and by Judge Henley on behalf of the Street Railway interests.

That Carson's labor had been rewarded was testified to by the vast audience which crowded the immense auditorium from top to bottom.

Susie Allen was very much attracted by the prospect that it would afford a pleasing diversion to attend, and it did not require a great deal of persuasion on her part to make Irene and Alice forego their scruples against attending a large gathering of such a promiscuous nature.

Much to Irene's surprise, the Judge seemed rather pleased at her desire to be present.

The Committee took possession of the Judge on his arrival, and the girls were shown seats especially provided for the ladies and their escorts. They were soon joined by Marston, who entertained them by pointing out the speakers, notables,

and other people of interest in the audience.

"I think it's so funny," Susie remarked, "that Mr. Barker should take such an interest in the street car fare."

"Aren't you interested in it?" Marston asked.

"Oh, I like to see them fight, but I don't care who whips."

"If you were a man you'd probably be a scrapper yourself. I don't see where you get your pugnacious disposition from. Your father doesn't seem to be built that way."

"Pa hardly ever takes sides with anybody, but I believe he likes to see people get into each other's hair."

"He may not take sides, but I saw him quoted in the 'Chronicle' as being against the Street Railway, and in the 'Telegram' as being for it."

"Yes, Pa talks nice to every one that comes around."

"He reminds me," said Charlie, laughingly, "of the old farmer down in Virginia during the war. His farm lay between the lines of both armies, and he pretended to be friendly to both, or neutral, but one day he came out and looked at the streaks on the ground where his fences used to be, and at his empty cribs, and exclaimed, 'Well, I hain't tuk no sides in this here fight, but darn my buttons ef both sides hain't tuk me.'"

Susie shot a wicked little glance at Charlie, that

boded no good to him, as she remarked, "I think it is better to be like Pa, than to be so prejudiced as some people are. He was telling me this evening about talking with some gentleman about this street car fight, and how prejudiced the man was against you and Mr. Barker."

"Is that so? What was his special objection to me?"

"Oh, he didn't have any. Papa spoke of how active you had been, and he said, 'Oh, he's a regular fly up the creek, he don't amount to anything. We could buy him for a hundred dollars if he didn't belong to Barker. He simply sneezes every time Barker takes snuff.'"

The color slowly swept over Charlie's face and he bit his lip to keep back an offensive reply, but Alice was unable to restrain herself.

"Susie Allen," she cried, "you're the meanest girl I ever met. I'll never go with you any place again as long as I live."

Susie looked at her in wide-eyed astonishment. "Now, what are you gettin' your mad up at me for?" she asked. "I was just telling Charlie how prejudiced some people are, and I wouldn't tell him till he asked me. I hate to hurt any person's feelings."

"You don't any such a thing," Alice responded. "I believe you just made that up to see how disagreeable you could be."

"I did no such a thing, and I told Papa I didn't believe Charlie could be bought even for two hundred dollars, and as for his sneezing every time Mr. Barker took snuff, there was no truth in that, for I knew Mr. Barker didn't use snuff."

"Now, pretend to be silly. I do think, Susie Allen, you can be the most disagreeable girl I ever knew, or else you are the most foolish."

"You are just like Papa. He says sometimes he don't know what to think about me, whether I'm a disagreeable fool, or a fool to be so disagreeable."

Irene, though secretly amused, but anxious to keep peace, here interposed. "Speaking of Mr. Barker, I have wondered myself what makes him take such an intense interest in this matter. I am not surprised at Father; he is the attorney for the Company, and I believe, a considerable stockholder."

"That's what Papa says," Susie exclaimed, before Charlie could answer. "It's all right to fight when you've got something to fight for, he says, but there's no use fighting and making enemies when there's nothing in it."

"There are some people," Charlie responded, "who look only to their own interests. There are others who are largely governed in their actions by how they will affect the interests of others. Bob is one of the latter. I happen to know that he could have a free pass on the road and a five thou-

sand fee besides, but such an inducement was no temptation, or at least was not sufficient to induce him to desert the cause of the people in this fight."

Irene turned her gaze towards Barker who was sitting on the stage and their eyes met and spoke to each other. What it was they said neither knew, but it left them both under a strange feeling of excitement.

"That was certainly very self-sacrificing," she said to Charlie as she withdrew her gaze, "though it seems to me that in this case the people are not in danger of suffering much, if any, wrong."

"I know Papa, if he knew that, wouldn't call him a disagreeable fool, but he'd call him one beginning with 'd,' just the same, and a big capital D at that," said Susie energetically. "But I like a fool of that kind. I wouldn't give a big hearted fellow like Bob Barker for a whole acre of those men, who, when a dollar gets before their eyes can't see anything else."

Irene smiled indulgently and laid her hand on Susie's in a caressing way, and Charlie looked at her almost kindly, as he said: "I'll have to tell Bob that."

"Well, you needn't. I'll tell him myself in a way that won't hurt him. I admire his big heart, but I don't want him to get the big head, and I think that's his principal danger at present."

"If he should get it, I guess you can shrink it

fast enough," Charlie laughingly retorted as he left them to report the meeting which was just then being called to order.

A number of short speeches were made, all of which were of a nature to arouse the feelings of the audience to a pretty strong pitch, five out of six of whom were opposed to the Street Railway Company.

Judge Henley was then introduced to present the side of the Street Railway Company. At times he grew witty, as well as eloquent, and was making a very plausible and logical argument from his standpoint of the Company's interest, when he was interrupted by a question from a member of the audience which was answered promptly and pleasantly. It proved, however, to be the signal for almost a fusilade of questions. Either because of his inability to answer satisfactorily, or because they were not couched in proper terms, he lost his temper suddenly, and opened out in a tirade against people who never had anything themselves or the ability to get anything, and were always foremost in trying to rob others of their just earnings, interspersing his remarks with the terms demagogues, thieves, and anarchists.

His scathing and intemperate denunciations soon had the people worked up to fever pitch, and they began to interrupt him with cat-calls, cries of

"sit down," "get out," and so on, until there was a perfect pandemonium.

The Chairman, who was entirely inadequate to the task, endeavored in vain to secure order, while the Judge stood with arms folded, glaring contemptuously and defiantly at the audience.

At this point, Barker arose and came to the front of the stage. He held up his hand, and the crowd quickly quieted down. Then he spoke earnestly and sternly, saying: "This meeting was called for the purpose of discussing the Blanket Franchise. Judge Henley was invited here to present the arguments in favor of that measure. It was also arranged that I should reply to those arguments to the best of my ability, but, if he cannot receive courteous attention from this audience then I wash my hands of the whole affair and will absolutely decline to take any part in the meeting."

Complete silence followed the announcement, and, at the request of the Chairman, the Judge proceeded with his arguments, but in a more temperate tone.

As the recognized leader of the Anti-franchise forces, Barker was greeted as he arose to make his reply by a hearty round of applause.

After complimenting Judge Henley on the able manner in which he had presented his side of the question, he began an analysis of his argument. Here, he showed the advantage of thorough prepa-

ration, and displayed a knowledge far superior to that of the Judge in reference to the history of the road. After reviewing this thoroughly, he proceeded to demonstrate that the Company insisted upon a compensation in fare that would pay interest and dividends on eighteen millions of bonds and stock, while it was returned for taxation at a little over one-half million, or less than one-thirtieth of the value upon which it desired returns, and at the same time was taking legal steps to prevent an increase of assessment by the Board of Tax Equalization.

He also touched upon the equity, as well as upon the legal aspect of the Perpetual Franchise, and gave his reasons for believing that such a grant by a City Council, without express authority of the State Legislature, was absolutely void, and in this connection quoted a decision by Judge Henley himself while on the bench.

"I still contend that's good law," the Judge interrupted.

"Good law, by a good lawyer," Barker responded, and continued with his argument.

Taking up the question of the financial ability of the Company to reduce the fare to three cents, he proceeded to show that in two or three years, at the present growth of the city, the road would be amply able, under such a reduction, to pay dividends on all of its stock, though the greater portion of it represented not a dollar of outlay.

He closed with a vivid picture, full of pathos, of the sacrifices which many poor people had to make in order to pay their fare, whose work was so distant from their homes as to make it imperative for them to use the cars; the comforts which could be secured to themselves and their families by the savings effected, while in other cases poor men and women were compelled to walk many weary miles to and from their work who would be enabled to ride at a more reasonable rate of fare.

Nothing stirs an audience like an appeal to their sympathies, and as Barker finished there was complete silence for a time, followed by such an outburst of applause as shook the building.

When the great demonstration occurred against the Judge, Irene felt greatly outraged. Her face paled and flushed with alarm and indignation, and it was with difficulty that she restrained herself from making her way to the stage to support him by her presence and join him in hurling defiance at the audience.

When Robert, however, came to the rescue, a strong wave of gratitude passed over her, and when, in beginning his reply, he paid a tribute to the Judge, this kindly feeling was accentuated. As he mercilessly analyzed the arguments presented by her father, however, a feeling of antagonism began growing towards him, but when he made his eloquent appeal in closing, she could not but con-

trast it with the sordid appeal of the Judge who seemed to think only of the material side of the question.

Barker's glowing, mobile face mirrored every phase of the feelings to which he was giving impassioned expression in his deep, musical voice,—now quivering with honest indignation, now trembling with pathos,—as he drew his word-pictures of the suffering poor. As Irene watched him, she forgot everything else; her lips were parted as if eagerly drinking in every utterance, while her eyes shone with unshed tears, and the long, deep quivering sigh which she drew as he finished betrayed how profoundly she had been affected.

Released from the spell of his oratory, her emotion began to subside, and the old conflict once more commenced.

On finishing the argument and while the audience were waiting for the report of the Committee on Resolutions, Robert made his way to where Irene and her companions were seated. He was often intercepted by persons desirous of congratulating him on his effort. It was with a keen sense of exhilaration that he reached the girls.

Alice greeted him first and exclaimed as she extended her hand, "That was a great speech, Mr. Barker, let me congratulate you."

"Thank you, I am glad you liked it," he replied.

"I don't want to be left out in the congratula-

tions, either," Susie said as she offered her hand. "You certainly did stir up the animals in great shape, why I almost cried myself, when I thought, 'What if I were three miles from home, and didn't have the price of a street car ticket with me.'"

"I hardly thought you had so much sympathy for yourself," he remarked, smiling pleasantly.

As he moved along opposite Irene and half extended his hand, she dropped her eyes and allowed hers to lie limply in her lap for a moment, while her face flushed with embarrassment, but the hesitation was hardly noticeable till she frankly placed her hand in his and exclaimed, "And I, too, want to congratulate you, Mr. Barker, and also to thank you for your efforts to secure Father courteous treatment."

"I regret beyond words, Irene, that the audience treated the Judge as they did, but you can rest assured that it was in no sense personal. Any other speaker taking the same position would have been accorded the same sort of reception."

"It was good of you to come to Father's rescue, but you were so severe in your arraignment of his argument that I confess I didn't know whether to feel grateful or offended."

"You know, Irene, that lawyers are trained to give and receive hard blows in argument and yet be the best of friends."

"Yes, I know, but it appears that Father has no

patience any more with anybody opposed to him, and then it seems, too, that you and he get on the opposite sides of everything of late."

"I assure you that it was entirely unexpected to me tonight. I did not know at the time I consented to speak that the Judge would be the representative of the Company."

"Oh, I am glad to hear that," Irene said earnestly. "I couldn't help but feel hurt to think you would purposely put yourself in antagonism to him when you know how he feels."

He had dropped into a seat beside her, and for the time they were absorbed in each other.

"I must do my duty as I see it," he replied, "but there is hardly anything I would not do to please you." His voice had taken on a tender cadence, and as he leaned towards her his shoulder touched hers.

For a few moments there was a delicious silence, which Susie interrupted by saying, "I'm not very much on Scriptures, but it seems to me there's something about 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.' Judging from your looks, Mr. Barker, you've about got there."

"Do I look happy enough for that?" he asked.

"Well, you just do. Nobody ever snuggles up to me, and looks happy. I wonder what's the reason?"

"Because you wouldn't let a person be happy if

he wanted to," Alice responded a little spitefully.

"Maybe there is something in that. Do you suppose if I were to fall off a camel into somebody's arms, it would change my disposition?"

"Now, Susie Allen, you promised me you would never say anything about that again," Alice cried blushing furiously.

"HOLY MOSES! I forgot."

Robert and Irene, who had both heard the story, laughed heartily and peace was restored again.

The Committee on Resolutions reported along the same lines as those adopted at the local meetings.

The various members of the Council, a majority of whom were present, were called upon and each one expressed himself in favor of the resolutions, but in some instances in language somewhat equivocal; after which they were adopted by a practically unanimous vote.

As walking with Irene, Robert escorted them to the exit of the auditorium at the close of the meeting, she said to him in a low voice that conveyed much meaning, "I think you had better leave us now, Mr. Barker. Father may not be in a very good humor."

"As you think best," he answered, and, holding out his hand, said, "Good-night."

Her hand rested lingeringly in his for a moment,

as she rejoined softly, "Good-night—and, thank you."

The Judge was impatiently awaiting them and hurried them into the carriage in a way that indicated he could with difficulty restrain himself.

"Did you enjoy the meeting, Judge?" Susie asked in her most innocent manner.

"Huh?" he enquired, glaring at her savagely.

"I asked, did you enjoy the meeting?" she repeated in no wise abashed.

He looked at first as if he would treat her question with silent contempt, but thought better of it and answered, "I can't say I was overjoyed."

"You certainly got a warm reception, and I have often heard how pleasing that is to a speaker."

His face relaxed its grimness a little. "Yes, I certainly got a warm reception. Are you trying to be smart, Susie, or are you as big a fool as you look?"

"Oh, I don't know. You certainly looked grand, Judge, when you were standing up there with your arms folded. You reminded me of Ajax defying the lightning, or was it Achilles?"

"It would be difficult for me to tell whom I reminded you of. I don't pretend to be able to read a mind like yours."

"I don't know whether that is a compliment or not, Judge; but don't you think Mr. Barker made a fine speech? He just spread himself."

"That was about all there was to it. He reminded me of the hen the boy set on three dozen eggs just because he wanted to see the darned old thing spread herself."

Susie laughed merrily. "Well, it seems Mr. Barker spread himself enough to bring about 'steen councilmen out of their shells this evening, against the Blanket Franchise."

"You can't always tell what a chick means every time it cheeps."

"At any rate, Mr. Barker acted very nice when the audience were putting you through the Catechism."

"Yes, he's an expert at working up people till they're crazy with prejudice and then coming forward with that 'Be-Jesus' expression of his, and pretending to be greatly shocked."

Susie gave a little shriek, "Judge, you are getting positively wicked. I'm afraid to talk to you any more."

"Father," Irene said severely, "I am surprised that you should treat Mr. Barker so unjustly. You never give him credit for any good thing he does, but always hold him responsible for other people's misdoings."

The Judge turned to her frowningly, "I do not take my opinions from you," he said harshly. "Nor do I need any instructions from you as to how I shall express myself."

"But, don't you see, Father, how unjust and ungrateful it appears to make such a remark? Even if you do suspect his good faith, you ought to give him the benefit of the doubt till you can get proof of the contrary."

"I believe I just informed you that I did not need any instructions. It will be well for you to remember this in the future."

CHAPTER XIV.

A FOREIGN MISSION.

The Anti-franchise people were jubilant over the effects of the great mass meeting. It was the second day after, that Barker was visited by President Manville of the Gas and Electric Lighting Company. Manville was one of these "Divine Right" type of men who use other people's money to save them from themselves,—while incidentally lining their own pockets—and thank God unctiously for the inspiration that led them to do it.

"Are your services particularly engaged for the next two or three weeks, Mr. Barker?" he asked.

"I have some important work on hand in the preparation of some cases," Robert answered, "but not so much that I could not take on more."

"The work which we want done will require your absence from the city for two or three, perhaps four, weeks. I have heard you highly recommended as a careful, painstaking lawyer, and as the matter we would like to engage you in is of great importance, we would be willing to compensate you liberally."

"Thank you, Mr. Manville. What is the nature of the work you speak of?"

"You have probably heard that the parties controlling our company are negotiating, have, in fact, almost completed the purchase, of both the Gas and Electric Lighting Companies of Omaha. The only thing necessary to complete the deal is a verification of the representations made as to the value of these companies. I do not mean their physical properties particularly, but the conditions of the franchises; the terms of the Charters under which they are operating; the legality of the consolidation, and, in short, everything bearing upon their legal rights under the laws of the State in which they are located."

"I see."

"We could, of course, secure able counsel in Omaha, but we want to have some one whom we know to be absolutely reliable and who cannot be influenced by the local environments. You can readily understand that a very slight mistake in the direction indicated might mean many thousand dollars loss to us. We have looked over the field carefully, and have come to the conclusion that you could attend to this business to our satisfaction."

"And the compensation?"

"We will not quarrel about that. We had thought about three thousand, with expenses, would be a liberal fee, and if you are detained

beyond, say, two weeks, we will add a thousand a week for all extra time."

Barker's first impulse was to accept the offer, but in order not to appear too eager to accept the proposition, he said:

"Your terms seem quite liberal, Mr. Manville, but there are large interests involved as you say, and the responsibility is very great. I will consider the matter carefully and let you know my decision tomorrow, if you can wait so long."

"Very well, Mr. Barker. I should have liked, however, to have closed up the matter today, as we cannot afford to delay it much longer. Shall I call for your decision or will you communicate with me?"

"I will let you know."

There are few people who will not concede that the rights of individuals are superior to the rights of property; yet almost invariably the man who champions the rights of wealth and property are designated as conservative, fair-minded men, while those who put the man above the dollar are branded radicals and anarchists.

This had been brought home to Barker many times in the past few weeks, and was very galling to him. Considering the question in all its bearings, he decided to accept the offered terms. If the thought unpleasantly entered that on his mind that he was not getting into the big

est courage, he resolutely tried to put it from him.

Charlie Marston, hearing rumors that the Street Railway interests were considering the advisability of granting concessions in order to obtain the passage of the Blanket Franchise, concluded to interview the General Manager in reference to the truth of the report.

Upon enquiring, he found that Milligan was engaged.

"Sit down, Mr. Marston, I have to go down to the cashier's office a few minutes, and will see if Mr. Milligan will see you as soon as I come back," said the Private Secretary.

He was scarcely seated before the door leading to the Manager's private office was partially opened and the person who was preparing to depart was arrested, evidently by a remark addressed to him.

"You are sure then we can depend on him?"

"I don't think there is any doubt of it, Milligan. As I told you, he said he would give me his answer tomorrow, but if I know anything of human nature, he'll accept all right."

"I wish you had gotten a definite answer today. You remember what Marcan said: 'When you've got a man going keep on boosting him; when he's coming your way, yank him in before he can change his mind.' I'd rather you'd have offered him five thousand than take any chances on it."

"Oh, the three thousand was enough. I could

see that he was just holding off so as not to appear too anxious, and I didn't want to press him too much for fear he'd smell a mouse."

"Yes, there's something in that. I hope you're right about it. Well, good-bye, much obliged."

"Oh, that's all right. Good-bye."

As the visitor was departing from the outer office, Marston turned around from a picture he was intently examining and recognized the President of the Electric Light Company.

He had to wait only a short time for the return of the Secretary and was shown into the presence of the Manager.

Mr. Milligan looked at him in some surprise as he entered and a look of uneasiness crossed his countenance. "Hello, Marston," he greeted him, "how long have you been waiting?"

"How do you do, Mr. Milligan?"

"First rate. Did I keep you waiting long?"

"No."

"Did you meet anyone going out?"

"I believe I did see Mr. Manville coming from the direction of your office. Did you want to see him again?"

"No, it is not important. What can I do for you, today?"

"There are rumors on the street that your Company is willing to make some very material concessions on the Franchise business and I wanted to find out whether you could affirm or deny it."

Mr. Milligan sat sideways at his desk looking at Charlie in an absent-minded manner, tapping lightly the while with his pencil on the blotter. After a pause that was beginning to be embarrassing, he answered, "I hardly know what to say to you, Marston, I have refused to talk on that subject for publication, and if I were to give something to your paper, that has always been so dead against us, the papers that have been friendly would feel very sore, and rightly so."

"Yes, that's all right in theory, but as a matter of fact it generally goes the other way. Three-fourths of the political announcements and gossip in regard to candidates and politicians are found in the opposition papers."

"I don't know but you are right about that. To tell you the truth, Marston, I would hardly know what to tell you if I were inclined to talk."

"Do you mean that you have not determined what to do?"

"Not absolutely. We may possibly make some concessions, or withdraw our application for a Blanket Franchise altogether. In any event, some of our best friends are urging us strongly to allow the matter to rest in abeyance a few weeks, in order to give both sides an opportunity to study the question more carefully."

"Will you authorize me to make the statement that you are willing to make some concessions?"

"No, I wouldn't like to have you put it in that way exactly. Just put it the way I told you."

"Is that all?"

"Yes, all that I feel like saying at present, but you might drop in again in two or three weeks."

"Thank you, Mr. Milligan."

"You are entirely welcome. I am glad to accommodate you whenever I can, though I don't know but what you have made me talk a little too much today," and, escorting him to the door, he bade him a cordial, but slightly patronizing, good-bye.

"What news, Charlie?" Barker enquired, as Marston dropped into his office on the afternoon of his visit to the Street Railway Manager.

"The Judge has dissolved the temporary restraining order issued against the Board of Public Works, on the ground that the Board acts as a legislative body in recommending the Blanket Franchise to the Council and that the court has no power to enjoin a legislative body."

"Yes, I know. We expected that, but have gained some time by the delay. Is there nothing else?"

"Yes, I saw Milligan today and he intimated that they were either going to withdraw their application for a Franchise or else make some marked concessions, but that they would make no definite move for two or three weeks."

"I am delighted to hear that, especially, that nothing is to be done for a few weeks."

"There's just where I'm up a stump. Somehow or other, I've got the impression he was trying to work me on that. You know how it is; very frank; very confidential. A man like Milligan has always got something up his sleeve when he treats a fellow like me in that style."

"It does look a little suspicious."

"Yes, I wouldn't have thought so much about it, if he hadn't tried to draw me out to see if I'd overheard a conversation between him and Manville, President of the Electric Light Company."

Barker was at once on the *qui vive*. "You say you overheard a conversation between Milligan and Manville. What was it?"

"I didn't say so, but I did."

"Don't keep me in suspense, Charlie. Talk out."

Charlie looked surprised, but complied.

Barker listened intently, and at the conclusion dropped his head between his hands and remained silent until Marston became quite curious and a little irritated.

"What in the Dickens has got into you, Bob? You were anxious to hear, and now you sit there like a deaf and dumb man. I acted perfectly square in the matter. I couldn't have helped hearing it if I'd wanted to."

"It isn't that, Charlie. Those men were talking

about me, and I had concluded to accept Mr. Manville's offer."

"Offer; what offer? I'm not a mind reader, or good at guessing conundrums. Tell me what you're driving at."

Barker gave vent to a half ironical laugh that showed his chagrin and disappointment. "Manville offered me three thousand dollars to go to Omaha for two or three weeks on legal business," and he gave him a history of the negotiations, winding up with: "And I had made up my mind to accept the retainer."

"Accept it! Well, I should smile. I wish someone would offer me as many hundreds."

"But don't you see there was some sort of an understanding between him and Milligan about my employment?"

"Phew," Charlie drew a long, whistling note between his lips. "You can take my cranium for a rattle-box, if this don't beat my time. But what if there was? That's none of your business, so long as you get your fee. They simply know a good lawyer when they see one."

"You know what I am driving at. You have been urging me to accept. Be honest now, Charlie, would you respect me as highly if I did?"

"No, Bob, I wouldn't."

"That settles it," and their hands with one accord met in a firm pressure.

CHAPTER XV.

SOCIAL INFLUENCES ENTER THE CONTEST.

The Judge and Irene were sitting at breakfast, the meal having been eaten almost in silence.

All the appointments of the room, from the heavy mahogany table and side-board to the old-fashioned silver and cut-glass, bespoke that wealth and refinement that exhibits itself in richness and unobtrusiveness, rather than in the garish display of the newly rich.

The Judge sat twirling his cup around in his saucer and occasionally taking a sip of coffee in an absent-minded manner, as if he had something he wanted to say and hesitated to give it expression.

At last, glancing at Irene, as if the thought had just occurred to him, he said: "Weren't you saying something to me sometime ago about wanting to give a party or dance or something of that kind?"

"Yes, I've been out so much during the winter and have not entertained at all this season, except a few little informal affairs."

"Well, I wish you would give it as soon as pos-

sible, and I want you to invite Mr. Geo. Thompson and Wm. Bartley."

"Who are Mr. Thompson and Mr. Bartley?"

"They are both young men, members of the City Council."

"But I don't know them. They have never gone with our set, and they may not be the kind of people that my friends would want to meet socially."

"I believe I have a right to say who shall be invited to my house."

"Of course, if there is any special reason why these gentlemen should be invited, I will be glad to be governed by your wishes, though it may be very embarrassing to me and my friends."

Her lithe, graceful form and refined, clear-cut features were the very acme of high breeding and social standing. It was not surprising, therefore, that such a proposition was very repellant to her. Under the close, searching look which she turned upon her father, there was a suggestion of scorn from lip and eye, although a distinct undercurrent of appeal was in the tone of her voice.

The Judge looked guilty and embarrassed. He had always been proud of his social standing, and, it must be said to his credit, that heretofore he had been governed almost entirely by character, refinement and culture in the admission of people to his home.

"You must let me judge of the proper action to take," he said after some hesitation, "I would not, of course, allow any one to be invited to my house who was not entirely respectable. If I can do these young men a favor, however, without hurting anybody else, I see no good reason why it should not be done."

"You know best, but if I invite these men you ought to give me liberty to invite Mr. Barker and Mr. Marston."

"Very well, have your own way about it, though I despise the sight of both of them. Barker has fought me on every proposition in which I have been interested, and I'll make it so hot for him yet that he'll have to quit practice in this town."

"I can't see how you can be so unforgiving, Father," Irene replied in a troubled voice.

"Unforgiving?" he echoed harshly. "When a man deliberately injures me, I never let up on him till I get even. I'm an eye for eye and a tooth for a tooth man, and before I get through with Bob Barker he'll know it. But I don't want to talk any more about him. I want to insist, though, that you show Thompson and Bartley every attention consistent with your position."

"You can rest assured that I will not be lacking," she responded coldly.

As Irene descended the broad staircase to the reception hall on the night of the party her appear-

ance was in entire keeping with the elegant and stately surroundings in the Judge's fine old home. Charmingly gowned in a rich green covered with spangled black net, which accentuated the marble whiteness of her finely moulded arms and shoulders; her abundance of dark hair tastefully dressed over a forehead exactly proportioned to the oval contour of her face, brown eyes, Grecian nose, beautiful lips and teeth, with a clear complexion tinted with color like a rose leaf, completed an ensemble of charms which from the top of her regal head to the tips of her dainty slippers left little to be desired; yet her beauty was not of that striking type that made one forget all else, for character was written in every look of her speaking eyes and poise of her graceful figure.

The contrast between her and Alice, who was to assist in the reception, enhanced the appearance of each. Alice, dressed in pure white with her pink and white complexion, regular features, golden hair, and well rounded form, her head reaching but little above Irene's shoulders, was the very essence of sweetness, both in looks and in disposition.

Susie Allen was also an old school friend of both the girls, and though she often shocked and embarrassed them by some of her acts and expressions, there was a feeling of real affection among the trio.

The gracious and cordial manner with which the guests were greeted, was calculated to make them

feel at home at once. Messrs. Thompson and Bartley, though, were an exception to this rule, for they occupied the embarrassing position of being known to many and really acquainted with no one.

In consequence of this state of affairs, Irene devoted a good share of her time to these gentlemen, at the expense of her other guests.

The Judge had retired to the solitude of his library upon hearing the announcement of Robert's name and could do nothing to relieve her.

Mr. Morse, the young attorney who had been received by the Judge with great cordiality, hovered near Irene constantly.

Thinking that flattery was the open sesame to a woman's heart, he remarked to Irene, "If I did not know, Miss Henley, that such a thing is impossible to you, I would accuse you of bad taste tonight."

"In what respect?" she enquired smilingly, but with a trace of anxiety in her voice.

"You have made yourself so altogether bewitching and attractive that you distract the attention of every one present from your guests."

It was with her sweetest expression that she responded, "I hardly thought you capable, Mr. Morse, of wounding with such a terrible suggestion and then attempting to salve it with such bare-faced flattery."

"Frankness is one of my failings," he made

answer, "When I believe anything I never hesitate to give expression to it."

"I suspect, however, you do not remain long of the same mind or belief." There was a slight undertone of contempt, which was not entirely hidden by her bantering manner.

He was instinctively conscious of it, as he replied in a slightly constrained, yet earnest tone, "You will at least give me credit for always being of the same mind where you are concerned."

"I am not a mind reader," she replied briefly.

There was something in the tone that warned him that she did not care to continue the conversation along the personal lines he had directed it.

Taking the cue, he said, "It would not be difficult to read our friend Barker's over there, if the countenance is an index of the mind," nodding his head in the direction of Robert, who was looking far from cheerful.

"In what respect does Mr. Barker's countenance make his mind so easily read?"

"I simply meant that his appearance indicates that he is ill at ease and far from happy."

"You think so? I am sorry, I was greatly in hopes all here tonight might enjoy themselves."

"It is hardly surprising that he should feel a little embarrassed. I am rather surprised that he should have come at all after the active part he

has taken against the Judge both in the campaign and in the Street Railway fight."

"If I am not mistaken, it was stated in the papers a few weeks ago that you, also, were active in your opposition to the Street Railway Franchise."

"Yes, I acknowledge I lost my balance a little when the thing was first broached, but I do not allow sentiment to interfere with my business."

"Oh!" The ejaculation was susceptible of many interpretations.

He was uncertain as to just how much she knew, and his face was suffused with mingled anger and embarrassment as he continued, rather defiantly, "Business is business with me, and when I am offered remunerative employment in the legitimate practice of my profession, I do not turn it down."

"Would Mr. Barker have done the same?"

"Barker is no criterion to go by. He has some sort of quixotic ideas about his duty to the community and other sentimental balderdash, but if he were to run entirely out of funds once, he would soon find that the only duty the community owed him, would be to cart him off to the infirmary."

"I heard Father say the other day that someone reminded him of someone else because he was so different. I suppose that in the future when I think of you it will remind me of Mr. Barker for the same reason."

The scarcely veiled contempt of the tone and

words added to his feeling of discomfort.

"You approve of that sort of thing?" he asked.

"If quixotism consists of a high sense of duty, and a determination to do it at whatever cost, I not only approve of it, but admire it, and I am proud to acknowledge Mr. Barker as one of my most valued friends."

He tried hard to hide his chagrin, as he replied rather patronizingly, "It is not the first time, Miss Henley, that I have found that women have an entirely different conception of business from that of men; I assure you, however, that had I known Mr. Barker stood so high in your estimation, I would have been the last person to have said anything that could be construed as a reflection upon him."

"Oh, I am not constituting myself a censor of any one's views in regard to Mr. Barker," she answered laughingly.

Fearing that she might have transgressed the bounds of good taste in her strictures, she skillfully guided the subject of conversation into other channels, drawing Thompson and Bartley, who had been standing near, into the discussion, until shortly afterwards Mr. Morse excused himself.

That Barker and Marston were somewhat surprised at meeting Councilmen Thompson and Bartley, expresses their feelings mildly.

At the first opportunity for a little private chat, Charlie remarked: "Did you get on to the visiting statesmen?"

"Yes. What do you make of it?"

"There is only one thing can be made of it. It is a pretty shrewd move on the Judge's part, but I am rather surprised he should resort to it."

"And I too."

"He seems to be going his whole length. But here comes Susie Allen. I must get out of the way, I'd rather face a gatling-gun."

"Now I think that was real mean for Charlie Marston to run off that way when he saw me coming," Susie said to Barker as she came up. "I saw you over here together and I was afraid you'd get into mischief if I didn't keep my eye on you."

"That's very kind of you, Miss Susie."

"I know it is, but I was not so much interested in you folks. I was doing it mainly for Alice's and Irene's sakes."

"Those young ladies certainly owe you a debt of gratitude, but I see Alice has Charlie under her protection now, so you can feel relieved on that score."

"Yes, but Irene is still neglecting her duty. In fact, she seems to have forgotten everything nearly but watching the Councilmanic chicks that the Judge has hatched out in his social incubator."

"I am not sufficiently well versed in the poultry

business to follow your meaning exactly."

"Oh, no, Mr. Ignorance, you don't know anything about what I'm talking about. If I wanted to be impressive, dramatic, and entirely original, I'd say, 'Get thee to a hennery.' Can't you see that Irene is devoting all her time possible to Thompson and Bartley, because the guests are not showing them any attention. It's a regular game of freeze out. If I were in your place I'd help Irene out and make myself solid with those fellows at the same time."

Barker looked at her with an expression of astonishment and amusement curiously blended.

"Now, don't pretend to be shocked," she continued, "I know I haven't got much sense, but if I were a politician it wouldn't be necessary to pound every idea into my head with a hammer."

"Will you help me to put your ideas into execution?"

"Sure, that's what I came for."

"Then let us hunt up Charlie and Alice and get them to help us."

"That's easy. I just saw them go into the next room. There's one thing I would like to have you promise me before we join those folks."

"What is it? I will gladly do anything I can consistently."

"Oh, there'll be no trouble on the score of consistency. I just know if that Thompson goes to

talking to me in that excruciatingly polite way of his, I'll explode, and if I do, I want you to gather up the pieces and return them to my parents."

"I promise you; I won't say I'll do it with pleasure, but I will take every care with your remains."

"Then, march on, I am ready for anything."

Robert had been considerably chagrined at the little attention Irene had shown him and the amount she had been devoting to the Councilmen. On his arrival she had greeted him as she did the other guests, neither more nor less cordially, and merely remarking, "You are well acquainted, Mr. Barker. I hope you will make yourself at home and enjoy yourself," turned to meet some others who had just arrived.

They soon found Charlie and Alice leaning against the railing on the veranda which ran around two sides of the Judge's spacious residence.

"Well, I've captured you at last, Mr. Marston," Susie exclaimed, "I saw you run away when I came up. I saw Mr. Barker's face fall, too, but he stood his ground."

"I suppose you picked it up, didn't you?" asked Charlie.

"Picked up what?"

"Why, Bob's face. Didn't you say you saw it fall?"

"Now, smarty. I saw your jaw drop just now, but I didn't pick it up. I had no use for it. I am

not much of a fighter anyhow, but if I were, I wouldn't resort to the same weapons that Samson used."

"No, Samson wasn't in it with you."

"I realize that; he was blind. Whatever befell Mr. Barker's face, his countenance soon lighted up, and it was by its light that we found you. We want you and Alice to help us feed the chickens."

"Have you got them in a coop?"

"No, they are under Irene's wing."

"Oh, I see, but those are the Judge's new fledglings. Why do we want to worry ourselves about them?"

"Maybe you can coax them away."

"Now I want you to be careful, Susie," Alice here interrupted. "But what are you going to feed them?"

"Most anything likes taffy. I'll leave that to you folks, and I'll give them all the chaff they need," answered Susie.

CHAPTER XVI.

TWO STORIES INTERESTING TO IRENE.

Irene gladly welcomed her new allies, and the whole party were soon engaged in a lively and interesting conversation, and the Judge's proteges who had before been constrained and somewhat ill at ease in their strange surroundings were after a time feeling at home. This gave Irene an opportunity to excuse herself and devote more time to her other guests, which she gratefully seized.

From this time on, Barker caught but a fleeting glimpse of Irene during the greater portion of the evening. After dancing was begun he approached her twice with a request for a dance, to be informed each time that she was already engaged, and thereafter he held himself aloof with a strangely hurt feeling that was partly anger.

After dancing with a few of those with whom he was intimately acquainted, he contented himself with being simply a spectator.

It was almost time for the guests to think of taking their departure, when Irene, declining an

invitation from a gentleman with whom she had once danced, sought Robert out in an adjoining room, where he was sitting alone. Taking a seat beside him, she said, "Aren't we going to have a dance together tonight, Mr. Barker?"

"It is not my fault if we have not," he answered rather stiffly. "I requested that pleasure twice, I believe."

"Well, if I were to ask you, would you be cruel enough to refuse?" she enquired.

He looked down at her and her face slowly crimsoned. "Ask me," he answered.

"Will you dance this waltz with me?" she asked as she arose and courtesied, smiling archly, and yet with a tingle of embarrassment.

"I shall be delighted," he responded, as he arose and led her away.

There are times when nature will not be denied by all the precautions and petty conventionalities of society. As the electric fluid passes from one wireless telegraph station to another that is properly attuned, so does that subtle ether we call love find its way to its affinity.

So absorbed were they in each other that they were almost oblivious to the onlookers, or of any exertion in keeping step to the music.

When the waltz was finished, he threw a light wrap over her shoulders and they strolled out on

the veranda to its further end, as if it were already pre-arranged.

Although the winter season, the night was clear and not unpleasantly cool. They stood for a time looking out over the extensive grounds surrounding the house without speaking a word. The cold moonlight, shimmering through the leafless trees, rested upon Irene's glowing face and sparkling eyes, still under the influence of the exhilarating dance and the spirit of affinity which comes to young people at times when they feel that intangible something that shuts out all the world save themselves.

He had placed his hand on Irene's, which rested on his arm still, and she had made no objection, but drew slightly nearer to him. Finally she broke the silence, "It usually makes me feel lonely to look out into the night, but it isn't so now. It seems that any movement or life in the grounds would disturb me."

"And me, too," he answered. "The world seems all complete to me now just as it is. I believe, however, that the majority of people go through life lonely and longing for congenial companionship. I know I feel it very keenly at times and envy those who seem to have so many friends."

"That is my feeling exactly, but I thought you had more friends than almost any one in the city."

"I have many friendly acquaintances, and a certain sort of popularity due to my activity in public

affairs, but few real friends. I might say no intimate friends except Marston."

"And you regret it?"

"I feel the loneliness of it, yet the fault no doubt lies in my own temperament. I appear to be so constituted that I can concentrate my affection only on few people."

"I thought your love for humanity was one of the strongest traits in your character."

"So it is, I think, but it is largely impersonal and general, yet I honestly believe that I would willingly make any reasonable sacrifice if I could materially benefit mankind in general."

"I think I understand the feeling. I often think how narrow and circumscribed my own life is, and long to be able to do something to brighten other people's."

"Such sentiments do you more credit, Irene, because you have never lacked for the little pleasures and luxuries that mean so much to a large class of refined, cultured people who strive so hard to hide their poverty from the eyes of the world. I believe it was my intimate association with the producing classes that makes me feel more sensitive than most to such conditions."

"Tell me about it, won't you?" and the little increased pressure on his arm assured him of her interest and sympathy.

"I hardly know how to begin. You are prob-

ably aware that I lost my father when I was about fourteen and that my mother and I were left alone. He left absolutely nothing at his death, except our little home in the suburbs. Mother was in delicate health and was totally unfitted to cope with the world; in consequence, I had to quit school and go to work as the bread-winner."

"So young as that? What did you do?"

"Nothing very elevating, except as the building grew higher and higher as the work progressed upon which I was engaged. We lived some three miles distant from the location of a large factory in course of construction, and through the influence of one of Father's former friends, I secured a job of carrying brick to the masons at seventy-five cents a day."

"Oh, such hard labor as that?" and she drew a long, sympathetic sigh.

"Yes, it was hard labor for a boy totally unused to it. I had to get up about four o'clock in the morning and build the fires to get breakfast, and by the time this was prepared, eaten, and the three miles walked, it would be nearly half-past six, the time I went to work."

"You poor boy," she exclaimed, all the maternal instinct in her aroused as she pictured in her mind the little lonely boy trudging to his work.

"True, I was a poor boy and it makes me sympathize with myself now, when I recall the memory

of my plodding to my work through the darkness, for it was late in the fall and barely daylight when we began our work."

"I don't see how you had the courage to do it."

"That was the smallest part of it. I had never done any work before, and being unable to afford gloves, my fingers were soon worn to the quick handling the rough brick, so that every time I filled up my little hod with my sore and bleeding fingers, it almost brought tears to my eyes. My dear little mother was almost distracted and would cry over me nearly every night as she tried to doctor up my hands, or make stalls to wear over my worst crippled fingers."

"And you kept on at work when your poor hands were in such condition as that?" and there was a suspicion of tears in her eyes and voice as she made the enquiry.

"Yes, but as I grew hardened to the work it was not nearly so trying. Yet, oftentimes as I dragged my weary way homeward, the three miles seemingly almost interminable,—for I could not afford to ride on the cars—I would feel that I must give up, but when Mother would meet me at the door and call me, 'Mother's brave little man,' and tell me what a comfort I was to her, my courage would again be renewed."

"You were brave. Braver than the soldiers who

go to war and do daring things under the excitement of battle," she exclaimed enthusiastically.

"No braver than tens of thousands of men and boys who plod along to their work every day, and who if attention is called to them are dismissed with a sneer or indifferent remark as being only laborers. There was one thing, however, in which I was an arrant coward."

"What was that? Don't spoil your record now, when it is such a good one."

"I was ashamed of my poverty."

"It doesn't look like it from the way you worked."

"It is true, though. We were talking of the poor but proud, I suppose I belonged to that category. Our only income was the seventy-five cents a day I made, and that did not permit of many luxuries. In consequence, I often went to work with nothing more in the little bucket, which I carried, than a couple slices of bread, corn bread, too, at that, and a small piece of meat, usually salt pork, with very occasionally a piece of pie. The majority of the workmen gathered together at the noon hour, and they often urged me to join them, but I always declined, and, slinking off behind a pile of brick or building material, there ate my dinner in solitude, starting guiltily and hastily covering my basket if I heard anyone coming, for fear they would discover the poverty of my fare. The

loneliness—for I was the only boy on the job—and feeling of self-pity was sometimes so great that I could not always control myself and would give way to tears and sobs; but in no instance did I ever let any one witness such an outbreak.”

“It is that kind of pride which produces men who do something,” she said, appreciatively. “The picture seems as vivid to me as if it were right before my eyes. Poor little fellow, I feel so sorry for him, with his little torn fingers and his little aching back as he creeps off to himself with his great big pride. Oh, it was too hard,” and there were unmistakable tears in her eyes and a catch in her throat, as her whole heart went out in sympathy to the forlorn little boy, who was so real and yet connected in some indefinable manner with the stalwart leader of men at her side.

“Tell me more, please,” she said after a short silence, drawing still a little closer to him.

“There is not much more to tell,” Barker answered with a noticeable tremor in his voice, for he had been strangely stirred by recalling these days of hardship and Irene’s obvious sympathy. “Indeed, I am surprised that I have told you all I have. I continued the work, however, till I carried the last load of brick that topped off the great smoke stack, a hundred feet from the ground. The manager seemed to have taken a liking to me and gave me work in the factory, where my earnings

gradually increased, while I continued my studies at night, with the help of Mother, till the day came when I had saved enough to begin the study of law and take me through law school. You remember my mother, but no one ever knew the patient sacrifices she made for me, her words of cheer and encouragement when I grew discouraged, and above all, the wealth of affection she lavished on me. It seemed to me all the light had gone out of my life when she died."

"Oh, I know, I know. I, too, have lost the dearest, sweetest mother in the world."

"Yes, I knew her and loved her, too, for she always had a gentle word and kindly smile for the poor law student. Now, do you wonder, Irene, that my heart goes out to these people, in this Street Car fight, when I realize so well that just an extra cent or two means miles of weary walking to thousands of already over-tired, laboring men, women and children, too?"

"No, I do not. How I wish I could help. If Father could know these things from bitter experience, as you do, I can't believe he would be so pitiless in his opposition."

As he gazed at her beaming face and eyes softened with feeling, she looked so wondrously lovable and sympathetic that a great wave of tenderness swept over him, and, without conscious thought, his arm went around her and drew her unresist-

ingly to his side. Bending over her, he said, "Irene, Irene!" His eyes held hers for a moment, his hand lovingly caressed the smooth velvet of her chin and cheek, and then he bent and laid his lips on hers. "I love you, Irene, I want you for my wife."

She remained passive for a few moments, then, releasing herself, exclaimed, "Oh, how could I so far forget myself? We can never be anything to each other, as long as Father feels towards you as he does."

"Surely, you will not let the Judge's unjust feeling of enmity to me ruin both our lives?"

"My first duty is to my Father; I promised Mother, before her death, that I would never be lacking in duty to him."

"But you love me, Irene?"

"Let us go in, the guests will miss me."

He grasped her hand. "I must have my answer, Irene." Her head drooped and she stood trembling.

He drew her towards him, while she quivered and held back and came ever nearer, as if unable to resist the charm, until all at once she surrendered and lay in his arms with her head on his breast.

Tenderly he stroked her hair, and putting his hand under her chin, he raised her face and gazed down into her eyes. "Kiss me, Irene," the words fell upon her ears scarcely above a whisper, and yet there was something so compelling in the look and

tone that her arms went timidly around his neck, then, taking courage, the lovely face and sweetly puckered mouth were upturned to his, proud and unashamed, as their lips met in a blending of souls that was complete and unalloyed.

Pushing him away after a moment, with a startled cry of dismay, she quickly released herself and hurried back into the house, while he followed more leisurely, walking on air to strains of celestial music from the greatest of all organs—his heart.

The guests soon after took their departure, and he had no opportunity of speaking with her again, except to bid her "Good-night." Her hand fluttered in his for a moment as she said "Good-night," without raising her eyes to his fully, while a delicate color overspread her brow and cheek and was lost in the rounding contour of her snowy breast.

As Barker wended his way homeward, his heart swelled with joy that was immeasurable. Even the bare branches of the trees appeared to nod to him in a friendly way, as he strode along the nearly deserted streets, and a bright light that shown from the upper room of a tall office building seemed to him like a star of hope beckoning him on to a higher and happier life.

As the last guest departed, Irene made her way to the library where the Judge, reclining in his

large easy chair, had been half-dozing the time away. Noting the rapt expression of her face and the dreamy, tender look in her half-smiling eyes, he asked, "Well, Irene, did you have a good time? You look pretty well satisfied."

"Perfectly lovely, Father," and, going to his side, she placed one hand on his shoulder, while with the other she ran her fingers caressingly through the heavy iron-gray hair that over-topped his forehead, and which contributed so much to his leonine appearance.

"I hope you treated Thompson and Bartley all right, and made it pleasant for them."

"I did the very best I knew how. I am sure they had a good time."

"That's good. I suppose Barker and Marston put in an appearance? No such good luck as their staying away."

"Yes, they were both here and were so thoughtful, Father, in helping me to make it pleasant for Mr. Thompson and Mr. Bartley. I don't know what I should have done without them."

"H'm, H'm, ah! Barker and Marston entertained them you say? They had better attend to their own business and leave mine alone."

"Maybe they were attending to their own business." There was a suppressed look of amusement in her eyes and hovering about her mouth that puzzled the Judge and set him to thinking.

"You don't mean to say that that pair of scall-wags are trying to get Thompson and Bartley away from me, do you?"

"Oh, Father, it hurts me to hear you speak that way," she said earnestly. "Please, Father," and her arm slid coaxingly around his neck, "don't spoil the whole evening for me by getting started on Mr. Barker again."

"Oh, well, I'll not say anything to mar your pleasure, but if those rascals have stolen a march on me I'll get even with them," and a grim smile crossed the Judge's face, as the humorous side of the situation presented itself to his mind.

Irene laughed happily, and, bending over, kissed him affectionately. "Good night, Father. You dear, dear Father, how I love you," finishing her caress with an energetic hug.

"Good-night, my dear," and he looked at her curiously, wondering at her unusual display of affection and the happiness that seemed to radiate from her whole being.

CHAPTER XVII

THE FIRST ROUND IN COUNCIL.

At the next meeting of the Council after the temporary injunction was dissolved, the Blanket Franchise was referred to it by the Board of Public Works with a recommendation for passage.

It was a critical moment for those who had taken an active part in the contest.

Barker's whole being had become absorbed in the fight—waking and sleeping, it had been uppermost in his mind for weeks past.

He looked forward to the action of the Council with a qualmish feeling that made him almost faint; and when he considered all that he had laid on the altar of his sacrifice, he must not be judged too harshly if personal pride and interest were not almost as strong with him as was the cause of the people for whom the contest was being waged.

The opponents of the measure made a strong effort to have it referred to the Judiciary Committee. The motion was lost by a vote of twelve to nine.

It was then moved that the ordinance be referred

to the Committee on Street Railways. This motion, like the preceding one, was voted down by the same vote, twelve to nine, amid the hisses and loudly voiced protests of the spectators in the lobby.

A motion was then made by the friends of the measure that the Blanket Franchise be referred to the Committee of the Whole, to be considered at the next meeting of the Council, which was carried by a vote of twelve to nine.

This action was explained when it was found that both the Judiciary and Street Railway Committees were so composed as to be against the Franchise, and that the "Combine" was determined to rush the measure through, and did not propose to allow either of these committees to delay its passage by holding it for consideration.

The members of the "Combine," which had now shown its hand so plainly, slunk out of the Council chamber, but had to run the gauntlet of the crowd gathered around, who were not slow in expressing their contempt and detestation of their action. Indeed, not a few expressed the opinion in the hearing of the Councilmen that they deserved lynching for such a betrayal of their trust.

Though the majority of the "Combine" members walking with lowered eyes, pretended not to hear these remarks, two or three in a spirit of bravado held their heads erect as if challenging criticism. One of the latter addressing Robert with exagger-

ated politeness, said, "Good-evening, Mr. Barker," then, noting an acquaintance in the gathering, exclaimed with a great show of cordiality and easy good nature: "Hello, Jim, how are you?"

The man scowled fiercely as he replied: "Don't speak to me, you damned boodler."

The Councilman laughed with assumed carelessness, as he responded: "Oh, all right, I'm not worrying about speaking to you," but there was a quiver in his voice and his head was no longer erect as he hurried on, while the mutterings of the crowd took on a more threatening aspect, and one fellow exclaimed loudly: "Some one ought to just punch him one for luck!"

Acting promptly on the suggestion, some one did deal him a stunning blow, that staggered him against the opposite line of men, where he was met by a counter blow that straightened him up with a jerk and caused his hat to tumble off. Barker, luckily being near, sprang forward, and, pushing the angry, jostling crowd back with his open hands shouted imperiously: "Stop that! Stand back, I say," and the people, recognizing him, receded sullenly.

Replacing the Councilman's hat on his head, Barker took him by the arm and escorted him from the building. The man's face was ghastly in its paleness, in contrast with the stream of blood trickling from his nose and staining the front of

his clothing. He wobbled as he walked, like a drunken man, and was gasping and sobbing with mingled fear and rage.

Blood is no less exciting to enraged men than to wild animals, and it was a most fortunate thing that the Councilman was not knocked down, for, in the excited and maddened state of the onlookers, the mania which always seizes a mob to strike a fallen man would probably have terminated in a riot in which the members of the "Combine" would have fared badly.

Barker, Marston, Carson, and others who had made such a desperate effort to break up the "Combine," were almost sick with disappointment and anger, and it required all the moral courage they could summon to bring them to use their influence to restrain those who were inclined to resort to violent measures.

It was determined that a vigorous campaign should be waged the ensuing week against the Councilmen who had shown themselves so impervious to the wishes of the public, and plans for calling indignation meetings in each of their wards were immediately put under way.

Carson announced his intention of roasting them alive, and expressed his willingness to run the risk of libel suits. "Those men are cowards," he declared, "and do not know how much or how little we know, and if we have to defend ourselves, we

will be able, in my opinion, to put up a good defense."

"Go in, Carson, and if they come back at you I can give some ammunition that will soon silence some of their guns," exclaimed Mr. Robinson, who was the managing editor of the "Telegram."

His paper had in the incipency of the fight taken strong grounds against the Street Railway people, but had soon been quieted, and was now occupying what was claimed to be an entirely neutral attitude, yet everything favorable to the Company managed to find its way into its columns.

The policy of the paper was in direct opposition to the feelings of the managing editor, but in order to assert his personal independence, which was distinct from his official position, he had joined the Citizens' Committee which had been formed to fight the Franchise, and had in his individual capacity been one of the most active and effective members.

The "Chronicle" came out the next day with the pictures of all the Councilmen who had stood true to the people, encircled with a laurel wreath and headed "The Roll of Honor," and underneath, the names of the men in large, bold-faced type extending across the page.

Just below, the other Councilmen were grouped with a large mourning border around them and the heading "The Roll of Dishonor," and the names

prominently displayed as were the former ones. Right under the pictures was the legend, *Dead: Dead: Dead: Dead to honor, Dead politically, Dead socially!*

After reciting their names, a scathing denunciation of their action followed. They were called moral lepers, social outcasts, and bribe-takers, and were informed of the stigma which would forever rest upon them and their families; how all reputable people would walk across the street to avoid meeting them, that every man would be ashamed to be seen talking to them for fear others might suspect him; that bribery was written on their countenances, as plainly as if their price were printed upon their foreheads, and considerably more of the same character.

As was expected and intended, this article occupying the whole front of the paper, created an immense sensation, and carried consternation into the ranks of the accused Councilmen.

CHAPTER XVIII

A CONFESSION.

The boodler, like the murderer, must sooner or later give up his secret. No self-abnegation will ever relieve him. He sulks and cowers from public notice. He hates the mirth of little children, because his own heart is bound in fetters. He shrinks from the gaze of honest men because he feels that they know his infamy, and he starts at every rustle of the night wind, thinking that some avenging Nemesis is at his elbow.

Suspicion of the methods used was changed into certainty when one of the members, who had been counted as a creature of the Street Railway Company, but who had voted with the Anti-franchisers, called on Barker.

The man looked haggard and worn. He began his business abruptly by saying: "I've been in hell, Mr. Barker, for several weeks past, and I must talk to some one or I'll go crazy, and I think you are the proper man to tell what I have to tell."

"I should be glad to hear whatever you have to

say, Mr. Powell, but, first, I want to thank you in behalf of the people for your vote on the Blanket Franchise."

"It's the Franchise matter that has caused all my trouble."

"In what way?"

"I never made any great pretensions to virtue, Mr. Barker, and am up to all the ordinary political tricks, yet I considered myself a fairly honest man until lately. Will you regard what I say as confidential?"

"Certainly, if you so desire."

"Well, then, to start at the beginning. I was induced to become a candidate for Council by Joe Hartman. He kept at me until I consented and virtually took charge of my canvass and bore almost the entire expense. Naturally, I felt very grateful to him and was not slow to express it. He turned it off carelessly, merely remarking that maybe I could do something for him some day.

"A week or two before they began to agitate this Blanket Franchise he came to me and said: 'Jim, you've often said you would like to do something for me: now you've got the chance.'

"'What is it?' I asked, genuinely glad to be in a position to return some of his favors. And then, after pledging me to secrecy, he told me about the Blanket Franchise, giving me the assurance that a

majority of the Council favored it, and that it would be backed also by a recommendation of the Mayor and his whole cabinet, constituting the Board of Public Works.

"Under those conditions, I told him I would be glad to vote as he desired, if it would be any special favor to him. 'All right, Jim,' he replied, 'it will be the greatest favor you could possibly do me.' I want you to believe me, Mr. Barker, when I say I was perfectly honest up to that time, and the idea never entered my head that I would be betraying the interests of my constituents by such an action."

"I do not doubt it in the least," was Barker's rejoinder.

"When the papers got to agitating the matter," he continued, "I began to feel uneasy. I went around feeling like a whipped dog and constantly dreading that someone would approach me in regard to my position on this question. When I was pinned down for an expression, I did as others did; dealt in glittering generalities, and of my desire to make the best bargain possible for the people. Finally I told Hartman—and so did two or three others, as they informed me—that I couldn't stand for it any longer.

"Oh, pshaw, Powell, I thought you had more nerve," he said. "This thing will soon blow over.

These loud-mouthed howlers will soon quiet down, so that everybody will forget that there's been any kick. The thing's going through, I tell you, and you might as well get on the band-wagon; not only that, but I will make it worth your while to ride with us.'

"'But I don't want to do it, my people are all against it,' I protested.

"'Now, look here, Powell, this thing is a matter of life and death to me,' he answered. 'I made you a Councilman and I have your word you'll stand by me. I know it's unpleasant for you, but it will only be for a short time and then you'll be on easy street.

"'What do you mean by that' I asked.

"'I mean that there's three thousand five hundred in it for you, if you see us through on this thing.'

"The proposition nearly took my breath away at first, but finally I stammered: 'Why that would be accepting a bribe.'

"'Don't be a damned fool, Powell,' he blurted out savagely. 'There's no bribe about it. You had already pledged your word of honor to vote for this Franchise when there wasn't a hint of any money. If the Company chooses to make you a nice present for the unpleasantness you have undergone in their behalf, in carrying out an honorable pledge, no one can say that's a bribe.'"

"And what did you say to that?" Robert asked eagerly.

"I demurred for sometime, but I actually did not have the moral courage to go back on Hartman, independent of the money consideration; and when he showed me that the thing was bound to go through any way, whether I voted for it or not, and named thirteen members who would vote with them, I yielded."

"And how were you to get this money?"

"It was arranged that the money should be deposited in a safe deposit box in the M. and S. Bank. Hartman was to rent the box, for which he was to get duplicate keys, and he was to have one and I the other. When the ordinance passed, he was to place the money in the box, and then I was to open the box with my key and remove it."

"Do you know whether the same arrangement was made with the other men whom you supposed were bribed?"

"Of course; I don't know this absolutely and definitely, but I feel morally certain the same sort of an arrangement was made with all."

"What assurance had you that he would act in good faith?"

"We had little doubt that he would deliver the goods, but it was understood that, after the ordinance was passed, there should be no motion

to reconsider and lay that motion on the table, but that it was to be done at the next subsequent meeting, if the agreement was carried out all right."

"You say we, did you talk openly among yourselves about the matter?"

"Yes, a number of us did in an indirect way, but in such a manner that those who were in the deal understood thoroughly what was meant."

That Barker was astonished by these revelations, but feebly expresses the fact. He had felt morally certain, as had most of the people, that the major portion of the members who had voted for the Franchise were corrupted in some manner, but to ascertain with such directness and particularity just how it was done shocked and surprised him.

"How did it happen that you didn't carry out your contract?" he enquired.

"I am coming to that. After I had once entered into the corrupt bargain, I tried hard to stifle my conscience, and at times succeeded pretty well in doing so, but at other times I was the most miserable man in existence.

"I kept the papers away from my wife as much as possible, and would not talk with her upon the subject, but I believe I would still have stuck it out, if it had not been for something that happened to my little girl, my only child."

The man's voice trembled as he spoke of his wife and child, while two large tears overflowed his

eyes and rolled down his cheeks, and then he dropped his head down on his arms and for a few moments his frame shook with sobs.

Barker reached over and laid his hand on his shoulder in kindly sympathy.

In a short time he raised his head, looking somewhat ashamed of his display of emotion, and remarked, "I suppose you think I am rather childish, Mr. Barker?"

"Not at all, Mr. Powell," he responded warmly. "I honor you for such a display of feeling."

"I did not expect to get so worked up over it. The truth of the matter is, my nerves seem to be all gone.

"As I was saying, my little girl, she is about thirteen, precipitated the climax. I went home the other day and found her lying on a sofa crying as if her heart would break. My wife drew me out of the room and told me that she had had her feelings hurt at school. It seems that she had got into a dispute with one of the other girls, when the other little girl, in retort to something mine had said, exclaimed: 'Well my Papa ain't a sell-out anyway. Everybody says your Papa is one of the boodlers that sold out to the Street Railway,' and two or three of the smaller children who had overheard, took up the cry, 'Boodler, Boodler, Mamie's papa is a Boodler.' Of course, my girl denied it angrily, but hastened home, almost overcome with

grief and mortification. This was like sticking a knife into me when I considered the position I was in.

"It is true I had been to your mass meeting the night or two before, and had apparently been in sympathy with the meeting, but that was entirely for the purpose of disarming suspicion.

"The members of the 'Combine' all expressed themselves just as they had been instructed to by Hartman. That is, we were in favor of a three cent fare, eight tickets for a quarter, or anything else the meeting declared for, yet it was always qualified by the assertion that we were in favor of the very best terms that could be secured for the city, so that we could fall back on the claim that we did get the very best terms the Company would offer."

"I thought there was a certain ambiguity in the speeches of a number of the members, and it made me feel uneasy, but we thought it would not be policy to question the good faith of these men publicly."

"Yes, we counted on that. Although I had been a party to the conspiracy to mislead the people, it worried me nearly to death.

"But I suppose you know about the way a man would argue with himself to justify his action. That the thing was bound to go through any way and I might as well have the money, since my op-

position would be useless; that the people who were paying out this money were among the leading citizens of the city, of the highest business and social standing, and that it was no worse for me to receive it than it was for them to give it. I believe, however, there are three of the twelve who have not received or been offered a cent."

"You are sure of that?"

"Not sure, but I feel morally certain from the way they acted.

"But, to get back to my story. My wife urged me to go and assure my girl that there was no truth in the charge against me. 'You know how sensitive she is, Jim,' my wife said. 'She has the highest opinion of her papa, and would rather live on bread and water all her life than have you branded with dishonor.'

"I could see the troubled look in my wife's eyes, and I knew she was appealing to me for herself as well as for my daughter, and I made up my mind, right then and there, that nothing in the world could pay me for forfeiting the respect of my wife and child, however regardless I might be of the world at large.

"Well, she needn't worry about that,' I told her. 'I have publicly pledged myself at the people's mass meeting and I intend to carry it out.'

"Go in and comfort the child, Jim,' my wife

pleaded, and her face lighted up in a way it had not done for weeks.

"I went in and put my arms around Mamie and told her she was not to worry any more. She threw her arms around my neck, and, with tears streaming down her face, said, 'You are not a sell-out and a boodler, are you Papa?'"

"After that I don't believe any amount of money would have been the least temptation to me. I felt as if I ought to let some one know what was going on and try and defeat the iniquitous work, if possible, but on account of my wife and child I have not the courage to come out in the open and expose the corruption, though you can use what I have told you in any way you think best that will not identify me with it."

"I have but little doubt," Barker replied to his last assertion, "that some strict moralists would claim that it was your highest duty to come out and expose these people publicly, but as such action on your part would bring you into a certain sort of disrepute, and humiliate your wife and little girl, I do not feel like asking it."

"Thank you. Just to think," Powell continued earnestly, "that if it had not been for that childish quarrel at school, I would have been on that 'Roll of Dishonor' instead of the 'Roll of Honor.' My God! I would rather have died than seen my

name there. Think what it would have been to my wife and little girl. Now they will cherish copies of that paper as one of their most sacred possessions."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ROLL OF DISHONOR.

Thompson and Bartley were really ignorant of the breadth and depth of sentiment on the Franchise question. Reading only the "Times-Recorder" they were thoroughly impressed with the idea that nearly all the "best" people were in favor of it, and though aware of the strong expressions against it, accepted the representations of their paper, that these came largely from irresponsible agitators.

Making their way leisurely along Main Street the next morning after the reference of the Blanket Franchise to the Committee of the Whole, their ears were assailed from all sides, "Extra, 'Chronicle.' All about the boodlers. 'Chronicle,' Mister? All about the dead Councilmen and the Roll of Dishonor."

Thompson purchased a copy and as he and Bartley saw the manner in which their names were displayed their indignation was unbounded. This feeling was not allayed by noting the peculiar glances cast at them, or by catching certain re-

marks aimed at them by passers-by who took no pains to keep from being overheard.

While these things were engaging their attention, they caught sight of Irene and Susie, emerging from a near-by store, with the purpose of entering their carriage. Desiring sympathy they pushed forward to intercept the ladies.

Looking somewhat surprised, and not particularly pleased or cordial, Irene responded courteously, but rather coldly, to their greeting.

Launching immediately into the subject of their grievance, Thompson said, "Did you see this, Miss Henley?" holding the paper up before her eyes. "Isn't it the most outrageous thing you ever saw or heard of?"

"I read it this morning, Mr. Thompson," she replied coldly. "You and Mr. Bartley ought to know whether it is justifiable or not."

"Behold what a great big fire a little matter kindleth," Susie interrupted saucily. "It certainly is a roaster."

"Why, I voted for the Franchise to please your father, Miss Henley," he exclaimed, aghast at his complaint being received as it was. "He specially requested us to do so," he continued in justification.

"How do your constituents feel about it? Were they in favor of it?"

"No-o, I can't say they were. But we have a

great deal of confidence in the Judge's judgment, and we did not feel that we could very well refuse him."

"It is not my place, gentlemen, to tell you what your duty is, but it appears to me that a Councilman owes his highest duty to his constituents, rather than vote to please or accommodate some one person who is not even a resident of his ward."

"Then you do not agree with your father?"

"That has little to do with the question. I may say, however, that Father is the counsel for the company; I am not."

Thompson and Bartley's feelings of obligation to the Judge being mainly for affording them an *entre* into the society of which Irene was one of the leaders, they began to feel some perturbation.

"I am sorry, Miss Henley," Thompson replied, "if our action has not been such as to meet with your approval. What would you advise us to do in order to set ourselves right?"

Irene's heart bounded and for a moment she was in a quiver of agitation. She realized at once that it might possibly be in her power to change the whole course of affairs.

Though not very well versed in parliamentary matters, she knew that the action taken the night before was not final, but a test vote to ascertain the strength of the contending forces.

The responsibility was great, and as she was

wavering as to her decision, the picture came to her mind again of a poor, forlorn little boy trudging wearily home from his work through the darkness.

Her tense expression relaxed and she fairly beamed on the gentlemen, at the same time saying, with her most entrancing smile, "I am hardly the person to give advice, but if I thought the concessions which the people are asking for, just, I would endeavor to represent their sentiments, by trying to get the action which has been taken reconsidered."

"Thank you, Miss Henley, I believe your suggestion is a wise one, and we will probably act on it. Won't we, Bartley?" turning to his friend.

"Certainly, we shall be delighted to do so."

"Irene says she is not counsel for the company," Susie here joined in, "but she can beat a Philadelphia lawyer when she gets started to talking for the people. Now remember, you almost as good as promised to do what she suggested."

"We'll surely remember, Miss Allen."

"I feel sure you will do the right thing, when you have considered the matter carefully," Irene interposed cordially. "It seems to me, if I were in your place, it would be the proudest moment of my life to be able to do a great service for the people, such as you now have the opportunity of doing. But we must be going, Susie. Good-day, gentle-

men." This was accompanied by such a cordial smile as to profoundly impress the Councilmen.

"Good-bye, Mr. Thompson. Good-bye, Mr. Bartley," chirruped Susie. "'When vice prevails and impious men hold sway, the post of honor is private station.' I think that's right. I didn't make it up, you know, I read it out of a book and committed it to memory." As she reached the carriage steps, she turned and added, "I thought maybe I'd get a chance to work it off on some of you statesmen."

As they settled back in their seats when they drove off, Susie exclaimed, "My, My, My! What would the Judge say, Irene, if he'd heard you?"

"Oh, don't talk about it, Susie, I don't want to think about it. But I'm glad I did it," she added, in a tone that indicated her willingness to brave the results, whatever they might be.

"So am I. What is the use of being new women, and living in a free country, if we can't help the wheels go 'round?"

Had Irene known how much depended on her action how different it would have been.

Barker, Carson, and Marston were engaged in consultation at Barker's office as to the course to pursue under the circumstances, when Thompson and Bartley called.

They were greeted familiarly, but not cordially, by Barker and Marston, but looked very con-

strained and embarrassed at seeing Mr. Carson, to whom they were introduced.

"We came to see you, Mr. Barker," said Thompson, who acted as spokesman, "in regard to this newspaper publication in which we are classed among boodlers, and we hoped that, as the leader of the Anti-franchise people, you would set us right in the matter. We are glad to find Mr. Carson, the Manager of the 'Chronicle' here, as it will save us the trouble of making a personal call on him," he continued, turning to the latter.

"If the 'Chronicle' has done you gentlemen any injustice, it will be glad to rectify it, if you can convince us of that fact," Carson answered, "but as long as you act and associate with boodlers and thieves you are liable to be classed with them," he added defiantly.

For a moment it was hard to tell whether Mr. Thompson was most indignant or most astonished at the plain speaking of Carson.

"We are neither boodlers nor thieves, Mr. Carson," he said with much dignity and with ill-repressed anger, "and you have no right to class us with such men; so far as I am concerned, and I can speak also for my friend, Mr. Bartley, nobody has ever hinted a corrupt proposition to us."

"Do you pretend to say," Carson asked, "that you were acting without a prior understanding in joining the Street Railway Combine in the effort to

railroad the Blanket Franchise through Council?"

"I do not claim that we did not have an understanding as to our votes, but we do deny, most emphatically that there was any corrupt motive in our action. We are not in such impecunious circumstances that we have to sell our votes."

"I understand that the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole has arranged for a meeting of the committee on Friday night. Is that so?" Barker here interposed.

"I believe so," Bartley replied.

"We are well satisfied," said Barker, "that this is in pursuance of a plan to rush the thing through by considering it Friday night and then reporting it Monday night for passage. Now we have no reason to doubt your good faith in all you have stated, but would it not be the most effective way of convincing the people generally of the fact, to support a motion to give Hon. John L. Tomson, who has had wide experience in operating street railroads and who has a proposition to make to the city, an opportunity to be heard? Is that not fair and reasonable?"

Bartley looked questioningly at Thompson, who answered, "That strikes me as a fair proposition."

"Me too," echoed Bartley.

Carson sprang up and offered his hand to each one in succession. "If you will do the square thing, gentlemen, I will frankly apologize through

the paper for all I've said against you and give you full credit for your action. Nothing would give me more pleasure than to add your names to our Roll of Honor."

For a few minutes there was a regular love-feast. Before separating, it was agreed to telegraph to Mr. Tomson so as to insure his presence.

CHAPTER XX

THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE.

The next meeting of the Council was attended by a vast concourse of people who were designated as "A Foot Petition." Many hundreds were unable to gain admittance to the chamber, and not only thronged the corridors but swarmed out into the street. The spectators were in an ugly mood, and might easily have been excited to the danger point. The Mayor realized this and had caused to be detailed a number of police to mingle with the crowd and promptly suppress any violent demonstrations, should they occur.

Immediately after the committee convened a member arose and stated that he understood that the Hon. John L. Tomson was present and had a proposition which he desired to submit to the city. He therefore desired to offer a motion that he be invited to address the committee upon the question before it.

The Chair declined to entertain the motion upon the ground that Mr. Tomson not being a member, or even a resident of the city, was not entitled to be heard.

The member who had made the motion: "I trust the Chair will withdraw its ruling, or I shall be obliged to appeal from its decision."

The Chair hesitated for a moment and looked towards the recognized leader of the "Combine" forces and then said, "I will submit the motion."

Much to the surprise of nearly every one present the motion carried by a vote of eleven to ten—Thompson and Bartley voting in the affirmative. The announcement was greeted by a hearty round of applause from the spectators.

As Mr. Tomson was ushered into the Council Chamber by the committee appointed for that purpose, every one present eagerly craned forward to see this man, whose reputation as an advocate of cheaper fares was national, a man who was not a mere theorist, but who had had wide experience and was possessed of abundant means,—most of it acquired in the street railway business,—to carry out successfully any proposition he felt disposed to make.

His appearance was a surprise to most of those present. About medium height, rotund and jolly-looking, with an almost constant smile on his lips and hovering about his eyes, at first glance they could hardly believe that this was the serious, pushing, energetic, successful business man and reformer. When he began to speak, however, and they noted the plain, simple language that had the

ring of sincerity in every word, all doubt as to his ability disappeared and left in its place a feeling that here was, indeed, a great man who had consecrated his best efforts to the cause of the people.

He delivered a masterly address, dealing with all phases of the question and laying great stress upon the fact that he was thoroughly convinced, from personal observation and experience, that a three cent fare would yield as large a return as a five cent fare, owing to the large increase of travel which would result therefrom. He then made an offer to take over all the lines affected by this ordinance on a Twenty-year Franchise; pay larger wages to the employes, and to operate the road on a three cent fare basis, day and night, with universal transfers; to give such bonds as might be required, and pay the present owners whatever was considered a fair value for their properties and their unexpired franchises, as decided by an impartial Board of Arbitrators.

And last, but not least, to turn over the road to the city at any time the law would permit, as he sincerely hoped it would ere long, at a valuation fixed by a Board of Arbitration.

At the conclusion of his talk, he invited those present to ask him any question they desired.

After some whispering on the part of the "Combine" members, one of them said: "You seem to be greatly interested in the welfare of the people of

our city, Mr. Tomson, yet I understand that you endeavored to sell one of the lines you are interested in to the city in which it was located for fifteen millions, while the experts who examined into the question carefully, reported that the value of the property was between seven and eight millions. I would like to ask if that is true?" and he leaned back in his chair and looked around him with a self-satisfied air that indicated that he considered the question a "poser."

"I will preface my answer," said Mr. Tomson smilingly, "by saying I am not in business for my health or simply as a matter of sentiment. We did offer to sell the road to the city for fifteen millions. I will say, further, that the expert reported the value of the physical property at about eight millions, and it was a very literal valuation. The other seven millions was the value of the Franchise which had been presented to us by the City Council. Do you desire to make a like present to your road here, or do you want to do the best you can for the city?"

The "Combine" members who had been leaning forward with a look of triumph on their faces, as he began to acknowledge the truthfulness of the charge, dropped back in their seats with an expression of chagrin and disgust at the unexpected winding up, while the audience alternately applauded the speaker and hooted at the Street Railroad

members, despite the strenuous efforts of the chairman to preserve order.

Finally, one of the "Combine" suggested that Judge Henley should be heard. The Judge, however, was too shrewd to attempt to present the case of the Company under the circumstances, and in response to the call, said: "I do not care to say anything just at this time, but without desiring to cast any personal reflections upon Mr. Tomson, if you will bear with me for a moment I will repeat a little anecdote I heard recently.

"A porter at a railroad restaurant where the reputation of the eating was rather bad, was beating his gong vigorously, when a lean, hungry looking dog came and sat down nearby him and began howling very dolefully.

"The porter stopped and looked down at him and said, 'Dawg, what are you howling for? You don't have to eat here.' I might say to Mr. Tomson, 'What are you howling about? You don't have to eat here.'"

The laugh which greeted the sally was checked and the other side burst into laughter when Mr. Tomson replied, "I am simply joining in the general howl for better fare."

In the lull which followed the outburst of laughter and applause, Councilman Thompson, arising, grasped the back of his chair firmly with both hands while his face was pale and serious, as one

fully appreciating the importance of his position. He then said, in a voice slightly tremulous, "Mr. Chairman, I move that the further consideration of this ordinance be indefinitely postponed, and on that motion I ask for a call of the roll."

Springing to his feet, Bartley seconded the motion.

Amid profound silence the call proceeded, everyone strung to the highest tension as they waited the result of the roll call which they supposed meant victory for one side or the other in the bitterest and most important contest that had ever been waged in the city.

As the Chairman, in a voice hoarse with passion and disappointment, announced that the motion had prevailed by a vote of eleven to ten, the pent-up excitement of the audience and Anti-franchise members found vent in such shouts and antics that it looked as if many of them had taken leave of their senses.

Many of the spectators, leaping over the railing, surrounded Thompson, Bartley, and the other Councilmen who had stood by them, and showered upon them their congratulations and thanks.

To cap the climax, somebody called for three cheers for Thompson and Bartley, which were given with a will. Then another demanded three cheers for the "Roll of Honor" men, and they too were cheered vigorously. Then followed cheers for

the "Chronicle," and, to wind up the performance, three cheers and a tiger were given to "Barker and Tomson, the champions of the people."

During all this time the defeated members sat sullen and silent in their seats and no effort was made to control the crowd. As soon as the noise subsided sufficiently, the chairman rapped with his gavel and announced, "There being no further business before the committee, it will now stand adjourned."

Money is a power almost immeasurable, but public sentiment, when properly aroused, is irresistible. It is God speaking through the people.

Barker made his way on to the floor of the Council chamber just as the crowd were dispersing. Thompson and Bartley, their faces lighted with pleasure at the cordial demonstration made in their behalf, saw him coming and advanced to meet him with outstretched hands.

Ordinarily Robert was always affable and reasonably cordial in his address, though never effusive, but tonight, after shaking hands with Thompson and Bartley, he threw an arm over each of their shoulders and they stood talking together.

So elated and so at peace with all the world did Barker feel, that as Judge Henley approached them in passing from the chamber, he accosted him impulsively and cordially with a: "Good-evening, Judge."

The Judge stopped abruptly and glowered at them savagely, as he responded: "It is not a good evening for the material interests of this city. Furthermore, if it were, you are the last person whom I would desire to call my attention to it. I have a good memory Sir, and I'll not soon forget how you've taken every opportunity to injure me."

"You surely can't think, Judge," Barker replied, "that there is anything personal in this matter with me. What I have done, I did because I thought it was in the interest of the public."

"I ask no explanation from you. Bah! The trade of the demagogue would be gone if he couldn't pose as the friend of the people while working his schemes. I am thoroughly acquainted with the material of which such men as you and the weak tools by your side are made of. I am not through with you, Sir," and thumping his cane vigorously on the floor to emphasize his words, he passed on, fairly swelling with indignation.

Barker and his companions were fairly taken aback by the Judge's demonstration, but, after a few moments' silence, Barker laughing constrainedly, remarked with assumed indifference, "The Judge seems to be in a bad humor tonight," yet nearly all the joy of victory had departed from him.

CHAPTER XXI

BARKER AND MILLIGAN HAVE A COLLISION.

Two days after the vote on the postponement of the Blanket Franchise, Barker received the following communication:

“Robert Barker, *Atty.*

Dear Sir:—We desire to inform you that Judge W. J. Henley has been appointed to look after the legal interests of our road and would be greatly obliged if you would transmit to the Judge, at your earliest convenience, all the papers you may have in your possession to which he is entitled as our attorney. This action is not intended as any reflection upon your legal capacity, but we feel that the course which you have been pursuing for some time past cannot be otherwise than detrimental to all the corporate interests of the State.

With high personal regard, I am,

Very truly yours,

D. H. Stanchfield, *Pres.*,

C. D. & M. R.R.”

Barker's practice was almost entirely civil, and he was the regularly retained attorney of several large manufacturing establishments and wholesale houses, in addition to this railroad, for which he had done much profitable legal work.

Marston coming in at the moment found him staring at the letter lying on the desk before him. There was not the usually cheery ring in Charlie's voice, as he cried, "Hello, what's up? You don't look much like a victorious general after a great battle."

For answer Barker threw the letter over to him. After reading it, Marston exclaimed: "I'm sorry, Bob. What does it mean? Anything more than it says?"

"You can guess."

"You're right. It's a mighty dirty, little, mean business, too, but I'm not surprised at anything after the way Milligan has tried to hash you up in the Times-Recorder this afternoon."

"How's that?"

"Haven't you seen it yet?"

"No."

"Just look here," and Charlie handed him the paper, pointing out as he did so an interview with Milligan which was prominently displayed. It read as follows:

MILLIGAN TALKS.

THE STREET RAILWAY MANAGER MAKES
SERIOUS CHARGES.

*Against a Prominent Leader of the
Anti-Franchisers.*

"General Manager Milligan, evidently smarting under the attacks that have been so freely made of late, broke his usual rule of silence this morning, and in speaking to a representative of the Times-Recorder said:

"I do not care to talk about these charges of bribery. It is all rot and beneath contempt. We have submitted a perfectly fair proposition to the Council and it is up to them to say whether they will accept it or reject it. If we had been willing to resort to the methods with which we have been charged, we would have had easy sailing.

"I do not like to engage in this mud-slinging business, but if we had consented to allow ourselves to be held up, no opposition would have developed.

"Why, one of the leaders—I will not mention his name—who has been most active in this fight, intimated to me at the start that if I would give him a large retainer all the pack that have been hounding us would be called off. You can judge from the result what was our answer.

"I have refrained from saying anything about this heretofore, and will not refer to it again, but I thought this much due to our Company, for fear some ignorant people might be deceived by the specious lies of our opponents.'"

As Robert read this his forehead contracted with a frown of annoyance, but he made no remark as he silently handed the paper to Charlie.

"Read the editorial!" he exclaimed, as he shoved the paper back.

Turning to the editorial page, he read:

"The sensational development of the day is the interview published in another column with General Manager Milligan, of the Street Railway Company.

"No other inference can be drawn from it, than that Mr. Robert Barker is the gentleman (?) referred to. It is now up to Mr. Barker to clear his skirts of the very grave suspicion under which this statement places him."

As he finished, his eyes gleamed angrily, but he laid the paper quietly on his desk and dropped his head so that Charlie could not see his expression. He remained in this attitude so long that Marston became uneasy, and asked rather impatiently, "Well, what are you going to do about it, Bob?"

Barker started to his feet and walked back and forth across the floor two or three times without replying. Finally, turning to Marston, he enquired

abruptly, "Is Milligan in his office yet, do you think?"

"Yes, I believe so. He hardly ever leaves till four-thirty or five o'clock. Why?"

"I am going to see him."

"Do you think you had better pay any attention to it?" Then noting his expression and understanding that opposition would be useless, he continued with a strange feeling of alarm, "If you are bound to go, I'll go with you."

"No, Charlie, I must attend to this business myself," donning his hat and overcoat as he spoke.

"Now, look here, Bob," and he laid his hand soothingly on Barker's arm, "there is no use getting off your base. Let me go along, or else put it off till tomorrow." Marston was quick to resent an insult to himself or friends, but it seemed a matter of the utmost seriousness to him that Barker should think of doing so.

"No, it must be attended to right away. You stay here, Charlie," and he was on his way ere he had ceased speaking, his trusty friend, unknown to him, hovering along in the rear.

The Private Secretary of the Magnate, who knew Robert well by sight, approached him nervously as he appeared in the outer office. "Is Mr. Milligan in?" Barker asked.

"Yes, Sir, but he is very busily engaged at present."

"Tell him I want to see him."

"Certainly, Sir, but I am afraid it will be useless." Returning in a moment, he said, "Mr. Milligan is sorry, but it is impossible for him to see you."

"He is alone, you say?"

"Yes, Sir, but he is engaged in very important business."

"Not so important as my business with him," and striding across the room, he quietly pushed the much agitated Secretary aside, and, opening the door, stepped into the room, closing the door after him.

Mr. Milligan was sitting with his back to his desk and facing the door with a tense look of expectancy, not unmixed with alarm on his countenance. Gathering his self-possession quickly, he said freezingly, "Your business must be very important, Mr. Barker, to justify your intrusion into my office in this manner. I am not used to having my privacy invaded against my will."

"I have no time for platitudes, Mr. Milligan," Barker answered sternly, "I have come to you to have you justify your actions or make proper amends, whichever you please."

"I am not aware that I am under any obligations to justify my actions to you or anybody else."

"Have you read your interview in the 'Times-Recorder,' today?"

"I have."

"Don't you consider it a dastardly outrage to make such a reflection on my character?"

"I never mentioned your name, Sir, and you have no means of knowing what my experience may have been with others. Isn't it a little egotistical for you to assume that you are the only important factor in this contest?"

"But the editorial says there can be no other inference, but that you were referring to me."

"I am not responsible for the inferences which the editors of a paper may see fit to draw."

"But you can correct those inferences, and I have come here to see that you do it."

"That sounds very much like a threat, Mr. Barker," he answered sneeringly, "and I am not accustomed to act under such pressure."

"You can put any construction on it you please. I do not care very much for money, as you are aware, but I do care for my reputation, and I propose to protect it at all hazards."

"I am not used to being talked to in this way and I would advise you to modify your style a little when you have business here in the future. Do you know that if I chose to touch these electric buttons on my desk I could have half a dozen men here in a moment to throw you out of my office?" This was said with such a sneering, sardonic ex-

pression of having the game in his own hands that it was very enraging.

"But you won't do it," was the reply so quiet, but with such repressed force, that he inquired quickly.

"Why?"

"Why?" and he strode forward with the quickness of thought and grasped him by each shoulder in a grip that it seemed would almost crush the bones,—"Because I won't let you. See here, Milligan," as the latter made a feeble effort to raise his arms, every vestige of color having left his face, "I have kept your damnable propositions to me and Carson and the knowledge I have gained of your Agent's methods of bribing the Councilmen a secret, but I will expose them all in a way that cannot be refuted if you do not correct this matter. Not only that; by God! I will make you go down on your knees publicly on the street to me, and then fling you in the gutter as I would a dog," and he shook him until his teeth rattled.

The glaring eyes, concentrated savagery of his voice, and the exhibition of physical strength, which only the powerful, self-contained man can exhibit under stress of over-powering, uncontrollable anger, were absolutely terrifying.

Milligan was a man of no mean physique, and under ordinary circumstances no coward, but "Con-

science doth make cowards of us all," and he was incapable of making the slightest resistance.

"Let me go, Barker," he responded feebly. "I am willing to do the fair thing. I hadn't said I wouldn't, but I didn't like the way you approached me."

"All right, I will wait and see you do it," and he released his grasp.

Milligan fingered nervously at his collar and necktie, as his chair tilted forward again, while the blood slowly returned to his face. "Would you like to have the statement now?" he asked, with a voice not quite steady, as he swung around in front of his desk.

"Yes, I would like to have it now."

Milligan rested his head on his hands for a few moments, evidently in deep thought, and then touched a button on his desk. The Private Secretary almost immediately entered, to whom he said, "I want you to take a dictation, Mr. Taylor."

"Yes, Sir."

"To the Editor of the 'Times-Recorder.'

"In the interview published with me today, your reporter either misunderstood or misquoted me in some particulars. It was not my intention to reflect in any way upon Mr. Barker, and the inferences which you drew in your editorial were entirely gratuitous, and without a particle of founda-

tion in fact. Will you please give this statement as prominent a position in your paper as was given to the interview and editorial?

“Vêry respectfully,

D. A. Milligan.”

As he finished, he turned to Barker as politely and sauvely as if there had been nothing to mar the pleasure of their interview and asked, “Will that be satisfactory to you, Mr. Barker?”

“Entirely so, if it is published,” he replied, with equal politeness.

“Put that in type right away, Mr. Taylor,” was the order addressed to the Secretary, “and see that it is sent right over to the ‘Times-Recorder’ office”

Much to Barker’s surprise, he found Marston waiting in the outer office for him. “What were you doing here?” he asked as they were departing from the office together.

“Well, I didn’t like your looks, Bob, and I followed you, so that if there was a rough house, I would be on hand in case of need.”

Barker laughed as he threw his arm around his shoulders.

“No need for me to have asked that question.”

“How did you come out?”

On learning the incidents of the interview, he remarked, “Well, that gun is spiked. Milligan isn’t a bad sort of fellow, if it wasn’t for his little

idiosyncrasy of thinking everything is for sale and that it's all right to buy, if you've got the price. I suppose he thought that as you pay no attention to being called a demagogue and the other pet names, you'd let this go unchallenged. You seem to have the faculty, Bob, of knowing when to go after men with a club and when to soft-soap 'em."

"What sort of treatment are you subjecting me to now, Dr. Marston?" Barker enquired, giving him a friendly shake.

"I'm not soft-soaping, Bob, it's the truth with the bark on."

CHAPTER XXII

AN UNEXPECTED DECLARATION.

Irene, after having taken the decisive step, was greatly interested in the success of the Anti-franchisers—which in her case meant mainly Robert Barker. That she was not above a little hypocrisy or deceit was shown later.

It was the next evening after the postponement motion carried, that Irene, speaking to her father, said, "I see by the paper this morning that you folks were beaten at the Council meeting last night. I thought you told me that the matter was virtually settled in your favor last Monday night?"

"So it was, but two of our men played traitor to us. Those two young fool upstarts, Thompson and Bartley, that we had out here, went back on us. That miserable scalawag of a Barker got hold of them in some way and induced them to desert us."

"What makes you speak that way, Father? Do you mean to say that Mr. Barker bribed them?"

"Bribed them? Of course, he didn't bribe them; what has he got to bribe any one with? But

he got around them some way with his soft-soap or managed to prejudice them against me, when they would have been all right if he'd left them alone."

"But you invited them here simply to influence them in your favor; you did not care anything for either of them, why should it be wrong for Mr. Barker to try and influence them to support his side?"

"You make me very tired, Irene, always finding excuses for that man; I should think you would be ashamed to be constantly championing the most bitter and implacable enemy I have in the city."

"Oh, Father, how can you be so unjust?"

"There you go again. You seem to be crazy about him."

"I am not crazy, but I love him and respect him and it hurts me to hear you always assailing him."

The Judge sprang up from his chair, almost upsetting it in his impetuosity, while his face was dark with anger and surprise. "Child, child, have you really lost your mind? Do you realize what you are saying?"

"Yes, I realize fully, and it is because I cannot bear to hear you abusing him so unjustly that I have told you."

"Have you lost all modesty that you make a confession like that? Give your love unsought to a man whom you know I hate and despise?" and he threw himself down into a chair with a groan.

"Not unsought, Father, Robert—Mr. Barker has asked me to be his wife."

"And you have secretly engaged yourself to a man of that kind?"

"No I have not done that. I told him I could not without your consent."

"And that you can never have!"

"Please, please, Father, don't say that. I have always tried so hard to be a good daughter, and have never been wanting in love and respect to you. Let my heart plead for me, Father."

"I don't want to hear any more about such foolishness." His voice was now utterly cold and entirely devoid of any sympathy.

"You may have the right to control my actions, Father, I concede so much to you," Irene answered, drawing herself up to her full height and gazing straight into his eyes, "but you cannot control my feelings. I respect, admire, and love Robert Barker more than any man on earth. I am not ashamed to acknowledge it. I would be proud to proclaim it to the whole world." The erect figure, flashing eyes, and the intonation of her voice, in which pride and defiance were almost equally blended, gave her an appearance of such queenly dignity and beauty as to impress even the Judge. "And what is his crime?" she continued, carried away with her excitement. "Simply that he has such a love for humanity and justice that all the

wiles and cunningly-concocted briberies of the Street Railway Company could not swerve him a hair's breadth from his conception of his duty. Shame, Father, shame!"

The Judge's gaze was bent upon her while she was speaking with an expression in which curiosity, pride, and over-whelming indignation quickly succeeded each other. As she finished, he partially arose from his seat and then sank back, while his eyes fastened themselves on hers as he spoke with a cold intensity of anger that seemed absolutely implacable.

"Have you done? You were kind enough to say, I believe, that I could control your actions. If that be the case, never let me hear any such expressions from you again."

Her cloak of defiance dropped from her as if by magic.

Kneeling, she grasped his arm with both her hands as she cried, "Oh, Father, have you no sympathy, no pity?"

He averted his face and shifted uneasily in his seat, and after a little hesitation said angrily, "I say it and I mean it. Don't let me hear any more of this foolishness from you."

She loosened her hold from his arm and dropped her head in her hands, which rested on the arm of the chair. Her form quivered with emotion, and

at times a sob, which she could not entirely restrain, welled up from her over-charged heart.

The Judge raised his hand once or twice as if to lay it on her head to comfort her and then withdrew it as if ashamed to display any feeling. Waiting until the violence of her emotion had abated somewhat, he said, as he arose to go, "Come now, Irene, you will soon get over this. You have always been a good daughter to me, and you will soon look at this thing in a different light since you understand how I feel about it."

She raised her tear-stained face to him, and her only answer was a look of such deep reproach that he could not withstand her gaze.

Was it Irene's resemblance to his dead and devotedly loved wife which recalled so vividly to his mind her last parting injunction: "Be kind to our darling child, dear," that made his head shake and his whole body tremble like that of a decrepit old man as he walked from the room leaving his daughter still on her knees beside his chair

CHAPTER XXIII

THE MAYORALTY CAMPAIGN OPENS.

The vote for the indefinite postponement of the Blanket Franchise was regarded as a complete victory for its opponents, but it was merely a repulse, not a defeat.

The franchises for the gas and electric lighting companies were to expire in a few months, while the erection of an electric lighting plant for the city; the enlargement of the water supply and the installation of a complete new system of sewerage, involving an expenditure of millions of dollars, it was supposed would be the dominating issues in the mayoralty campaign which was now on.

Back of these, however, hovered the Blanket Franchise like a huge specter, for convincing evidence was not lacking that the Street Railway had pooled interests with the other public utility corporations to control the incoming administration, by nominating candidates acceptable to themselves in both parties.

Barker was not only anxious for a rest from the arduous labor and mental worry which he had

undergone in the past weeks, but the temptation was also very strong to retire while his prestige was undimmed and he had the credit of having waged a successful fight in behalf of the people.

A much stronger reason than either of these was his desire not to antagonize Judge Henley's interests further, so that he might be in a position to pave his way to a union with Irene.

He found, however, that he could not retire now without shirking what seemed to be his plain duty. He absolutely declined the use of his own name lest his motives be impugned, but it did not require very much urging to get him to take an active interest in the selection of a mayoralty candidate of his own party.

The selection of a proper man was no easy matter.

After canvassing the names of a great many, they finally decided to unite on a small manufacturer. He had never been active in politics, but had always taken a decided stand for the right, and his integrity was so well attested by those who knew him best that he was often referred to as "Honest Tom Gordon."

The opposition party had put up for their candidate a man of considerable wealth and of high standing, while the other element of Barker's party were advocating for the nomination an equally wealthy and respected man. Both of these men

were known to be in intimate association with the Street Railway, the Gas and Electric Light Company officials, if not stockholders in all these corporations.

Political battles are won, as are other battles, by thorough organization and discipline, and to organize a new army and put it in effective fighting trim against veterans is no easy matter to accomplish.

Mr. Baxter, the candidate of the faction of the party opposed to Gordon, had the support of the local political bosses, and consequently had already at hand a very effective organization.

By general agreement, Barker was impressed into the leadership of the Gordon campaign and, with Marston, Carson, Galvin and Stewart, the labor leaders, as his principal lieutenants, aided considerably by Thompson and Bartley, he began his work.

At the end of a week, the people found staring at them one morning from every bill board in the city large lithographs of the candidate with various inscriptions on them. "For Mayor, Honest Tom Gordon and Three Cent Fare." "Honest Tom Gordon, the People's Candidate. He is neither the tool of the Machine Politicians nor of the Corporations." "Nominate Honest Tom Gordon, the Man with a Back-Bone."

At the entrance to every large manufacturing plant and on every prominent street corner men

were stationed who handed out cards by the thousand containing the same inscriptions as appeared on the posters and various others, such as: "Vote for Honest Tom Gordon and New Faces at the Windows." "The Machine Politicians are against Honest Tom Gordon for Mayor. Are you?" "The Corporations are against Honest Tom Gordon for Mayor. Do they control your *politics* as well as your *labor*!" and others of like nature.

When questioned the next day as to the wisdom of making such a campaign, Barker responded, "There is no use of equivocating, it must be a bold fight to have any hope of winning. These interests are arrayed almost solidly against us. We couldn't placate them if we wanted to, and we don't want to."

"You don't believe in expediency then? You go in entirely for principle?" asked Galvin.

"Yes, I do. I think expediency is in itself a principle at times. I mean by that, that it is better to make some compromise in order to gain something that you greatly desire, than to lose everything in attempting to accomplish all you desire; but there is a time to fight and a time to temporize. This is the time to fight."

"At present, however, my policy is to advertise our candidate, He is not very well known, and I want to get everybody talking about him."

"Well, you are certainly stirring up the animals,

if that's your object. I don't believe any other candidate for Mayor was ever talked about more than Gordon has been yesterday and today," Marston replied.

"There will be more tomorrow. Our style of campaigning may seem a little demagogical, but I honestly believe that we can reach the people in no better way."

"You've got a great head on you, Bob. If we don't beat them, with this and your other scheme, you can take my spinal column for a step-ladder. We'll get the crowds, and if you can get to talk to 'em it'll be all off with Mr. Baxter."

"It's a little early to brag, Charlie. But we mustn't forget our organization. Novelty, noise, and oratory are all right, but we must bend our whole energies to enlisting the aid of a number of young, active and enthusiastic workers in every precinct in the city if we expect to win."

"Sensible to the last, Bob. But you needn't put on that solemn expression. We're getting there with both feet. Galvin, Stewart, and I and a lot of the other boys have nearly walked our feet off and talked our heads off the past week and we're getting the boys rounded up in great shape. I hope, though, we won't have to toast our organization at the end of the campaign as the two Irish veterans did their regiment."

"You want to be a little careful, Charlie, about

your Irish stories. I am an Irishman myself, you know," Galvin interrupted, laughingly. "But fire away, let's have it."

"Well, you must remember I don't vouch for the truth of it. It is told of two compatriots of yours returning home from the war. They had liquored up pretty well and as they were about to take another drink, one of them held up his glass, and said, 'Here's to the ould sixty-ninth. The lasht to come on the faeld, and the firsht to lave.' 'Oh, yees don't mane thot, Moike,' said his comrade. 'Well, what do I mane thin, Pat?' 'You mane, Moike, Here's to the ould sixty-ninth,—Aqual to none.'"

CHAPTER XXIV

MUSIC AND ORATORY.

Fighting is a game two can play at as Barker became convinced on the receipt of the two following letters in the same mail.

“Dear Sir:—We desire to inform you that we have entrusted our legal business to Mr. A. H. Morse. You will please turn over to him the papers in your possession relating to the Garvin Case. We are impelled to take this action to protect our own interests as your public efforts are being directed against some of our best customers.

Very respectfully yours,

James Bristol, Pres.,

The Bristol-Witmer Company.’

“Office of the C. V. & D. M. Coal and Iron Co.,

Dear Sir:—You are hereby notified that Mr. John A. Garrison has been retained as counsel for our company. Our interests are of such magnitude that we feel that in justice to ourselves it is our

duty to place them in the keeping of some one who can devote his entire time to the practice of his profession.

Very respectfully,
S. M. Courtenay, Pres."

"Any new developments today, Bob?" asked Marston as he and Carson, Galvin and Stewart, dropped into the Gordon headquarters for their daily conference.

"Nothing special unless you regard these in that line," tossing over the letters as he spoke.

Reading them aloud eagerly, he sat for a few moments in speechless indignation, before he remarked: "This is getting to be something fierce. I'd give a half-year's salary to tell the people that are doing this what I think of them."

"Don't get excited, Charlie. It's all in the game. I suppose they think that it is as fair to fight my interests as it is for me to fight theirs. I will still be doing business at the old stand when they get through."

"So will the 'Chronicle,'" Carson exclaimed. "You are not the only one who is being boycotted, Barker. Our largest advertisers are all withdrawing their ads. It is evident there is a systematic effort to break us down."

"There are only two things to do," Barker responded, "that is to lie down, or make it a fight

to a finish. I'm in to stay. Our answer to these men must simply be to make the campaign hotter."

"How does it feel to be a campaign-manager, Bob?" Marston enquired abruptly.

"There's enough work about it to keep a man from worrying much over troubles of his own, he replied laughingly.

"I suppose you have formulated some theories on the subject of conducting a campaign?"

"Yes, I have given a great deal of thought to that."

"What are they?"

"Organize, fight, fight all the time, fight hard, fight harder!"

"That has the right sort of ring," Carson exclaimed. "Now, what are the qualifications for a leader?"

"Courage, conscience, and concentration, I should say."

"That conscience-business is good," exclaimed Marston. "Why, the average politician's conscience has the best para-rubber beat a mile."

"You think they are pretty elastic, Charlie?" Barker inquired.

"Well, I should smile. If somebody could invent a currency system as elastic, his fortune would be made, and it might save an extra session of Congress, besides."

Barker soon acquired enough philosophy to ac-

cept the fact that if he gave hard knocks, he must expect to receive them. His opponents in his own party, as well as those in the opposition party, directed their batteries more against himself than against the man whose cause he espoused. Gordon was called "the Barker candidate," and Barker was accused of trying to make himself the boss and dictator of his party.

He was not so engrossed in politics that he did not give many anxious hours of thought to Irene, when he would have been better engaged in sleeping. The pleasure which he experienced in the belief that his love was returned was always marred by his inability to meet her in private, and also by the intense feeling of antagonism he knew her father felt towards him. There seemed little possibility of changing this latter, as Judge Henley was active in championing the cause of Mr. Baxter. Though he belonged to the opposite party, his former affiliations had made him well acquainted with the influential men and he exerted himself to the utmost, especially with those who were large employers of labor, and the stockholders of the public service corporations to get them to use their influence against the candidacy of Mr. Gordon.

Let the average man own five hundred or a thousand dollars worth of stock in a public corporation from which he does not expect more than thirty to sixty dollars return annually and he is always up

in arms to defend its interests, though the same man could not be purchased with a direct bribe of thousands of dollars.

Barker was no saint, and hearing from Charlie one day of an instance in which the Judge had been especially active, and also particularly bitter in his denunciation of himself, he lost his self-control and exclaimed savagely: "Let him talk. I beat him for Congress, I beat him in Court, I beat him on the Franchise fight in Council, and I'll beat him in this fight if I have to sit up nights and go without eating and sleeping to do it. Not only that, I'll beat him with his—I mean, I'll beat him all along the line."

"Jerusalem, Bob, you've got your fightin' togs on today," was Charlie's surprised response.

"You ought to give me a chance to blow a little occasionally," he answered, laughing in an embarrassed way, somewhat ashamed at giving way so strongly to his feelings.

It was in a measure a relief to him to be so thoroughly engrossed in his law business and politics that during the day there was no time to dwell much on his relations with Irene. Work, and more work, is the sovereign remedy for worry and discontent, and he took it in large doses.

Irene had more time for thought. Her father occasionally broke out in tirade against Robert and everyone with whom he was connected, but she

never deigned to make any reply, much to his disgust.

She was of a high strung, sensitive temperament, with much of the intensity of the Judge, and would not have hesitated very greatly in braving her father's displeasure if that had been the only restraining force.

Though constantly longing for his society, Irene avoided being thrown in contact with Barker as much as possible, and studiously kept him at a distance when they did meet.

How a woman who had allowed a man to hold her in his arms and caress her can at their next meeting have such an intangible barrier erected around her that he dare not even touch her hand or hardly speak to her, and all this without a word or look to indicate offense, has puzzled other men than Barker.

She read the papers carefully and was intensely interested in the progress of the campaign. There was no question now as to where her sympathies were. She was intensely anxious for Barker's success, and extracted all the comfort she could out of the comments favorable to him.

Alice and Susie, (the latter had also become an intense partisan of Barker's) made no disguise of their interest in the campaign, and in order to gratify her desire to hear of and talk about him, Irene managed to see them both every day. Under

the pretense that she looked upon their interest with good natured indulgence, she would usually introduce the subject by some such bantering remark as, "I just dropped in to see you politicians to find out how the fight is progressing."

After thus skilfully directing the conversation in the channel desired, she, as a rule, took but little part in the talk.

Occasionally, before she was aware of it, she would find herself animatedly discussing some phase of the campaign, and Robert's capacity to deal with it successfully, and at such times her flushed cheeks, sparkling eyes, and intense earnestness were not lost on the other girls, though they considerably refrained from commenting on it.

From the beginning, Barker had been assiduously at work getting ready for a musical and speaking campaign from a wagon, and in about ten days the arrangements were complete.

Their wagon was a very long, brilliantly lighted one, seating comfortably thirty or forty men, and drawn by four richly caparisoned horses with nodding plumes, and coverings bearing the legend: "For Mayor, Honest Tom Gordon." At either end was a large transparency stating the time and place of meetings. A banner ran the whole length of both sides on which was inscribed: "Honest Tom Gordon and Three Cent Fare." The Glee Club had composed a number of campaign songs full of local

hits and applications set to the music of the most popular airs of the day, and as they drove along these, with the accompaniment of a mandolin orchestra, were rendered with a vim and enthusiasm that were inspiring.

As they passed through the principal thoroughfares, at the intersection of nearly every street, the bugler blew a shrill call on his cornet, and then every man joined in with a will in the following yell:

Rah! Rah! Rah!
He! He! He!
Honest Tom Gordon,
For the Mayor-al-tee.
Vote! Vote! Vote!
For the Honest Can-di-date,
And break up the Boodlers'
Machine-made Slate!

Soon there were hundreds of boys and men following in their wake, and the rhythm of their campaign yell appealing to the former, they, boy-like, joined in at each repetition and fairly made the air quiver with their shouts and demonstrations.

As the first meeting was appointed at a spot where the two principal streets of the city joined, there was a crowd of a thousand or two people gathered by the time the speaking was ready to begin.

A number of speakers made short, pithy speeches dwelling on the necessity, at this time, of having a man at the head of the municipality like Gordon who was absolutely divorced in his business interests and relations from the great corporations who were seeking franchises at the hands of the city.

To the objection that he was not well enough known and did not know enough, they announced that they were taking this method to make him known, and whatever he did not know, he always knew enough to be honest at all times and under all circumstances—qualifications which were absent in too many candidates.

Between the speeches the Glee Club sang catchy songs and the orchestra rendered delightful selections, so that the people were never allowed to get bored.

Mr. Gordon wound up the speech making with a plain, common sense talk that made an excellent impression, and the meeting closed with three hearty cheers for the candidate.

Thereafter from two to three meetings were held every evening, and every ward in the city was invaded. The meetings were almost phenomenal in point of attendance, it having become almost a "fad" for people of all parties and both sexes to attend them, and urgent demands were coming in from almost every precinct for their presence.

By this time the contest was no longer purely local in its character as the interest of the whole state was centered upon it, and it was attracting much attention throughout the country.

Though Barker was in constant communication with the Hon. John L. Tomson—the originator of the three cent fare issue—whose aid was invaluable to him in many ways, the opposition had the direct personal help and financial aid of that past-master in practical politics, Senator Marcon. The Senator made frequent pilgrimages to the State Capital in his endeavor to head off the three cent fare movement.

He had large financial interests which would be affected by the establishment of such a precedent, but what was of even more importance to him, probably, was the reflected glory which would accrue to John L. Tomson. In the beginning he had ridiculed and sneered at this gentleman, but since Tomson had wrested his own city from him he began to fear that he might wrest from him, that which was the dearest thing in the world to him—his state and national leadership.

Senator Benson's road having secured its franchise, that gentleman watched the struggle of his colleague with great equanimity.

CHAPTER XXV

SOME TELEPATHY AND SOMETHING MORE
STRENUOUS.

The Gordon men's meetings were not all love-feasts by any means, and not uncommonly they had an audience that was distinctly antagonistic.

On one occasion this sort of thing nearly terminated in a riot. They were holding a meeting in a very disreputable part of the city, known as "Hell's Half-Acre," when a rain shower coming up, they adjourned to a near-by hall. In the audience was a well known bully and desperate character, Alex Russell by name, who was often designated as "Boss of the Acre." On the evening in question he was partially intoxicated and continually interrupted the speakers with impertinent questions and inarticulate growls. He was encouraged by a number of tough characters who were evidently acting under instructions to break up the meeting.

Barker had restrained his indignation with much difficulty at these almost ceaseless interruptions and at the insulting epithets which were hurled

at the speakers and their candidate. When it came his turn to speak he ignored entirely for some time the disagreeable remarks, but the man, Russell, seemed determined to make himself heard, and Barker finally stopped and said, "If the gentleman has any special question he desires to ask and asks it in a respectful manner, I will take pleasure in answering to the best of my ability, but I can pay no attention to mere growls."

Russell arose and after looking around at his companions with a leer and a wink enquired, with mock politeness, "Well, sir, will youse tell dese distinguished citizens what's de difference 'tween a Barker and a Growler?" and sat down amid the applause of his companions.

As soon as the noise ceased, Barker answered smilingly, "I should say just the difference between you and me."

The gathering applauded uproariously, Russell's comrades among the number. He jumped to his feet and shouted fiercely, "Maybe you'd like to rush the Growler?"

Barker's patience left him like a flash. "If you don't keep quiet or leave the hall, I would like to do that very thing," he answered, while his face became pale as death and he was shaking all over with excitement.

"I'll not keep still and youse nor none o' your friends can put me out," Russell answered defi-

antly. Barker immediately stepped down from the platform, followed by a few of his most courageous friends, amid the most intense excitement of the spectators, who were now all on their feet.

Russell stood awaiting the approach with a group of his supporters around him. As Barker forced his way through the crowd to the aisle where he stood, the man aimed a vicious blow at his head, which he ducked, and caught his arm by the wrist before he could regain his balance; with the other hand he dealt him a crushing blow on the jaw that completely dazed Russell for an instant, then reaching out and grasping the man by his coat collar, he gave him a jerk forward with such tremendous force that it pulled him off his feet and he fell face downward upon the floor. Stopping down, he grasped him with both hands and sat him upon his feet, and rushing him to the door on the run, despite his frantic struggles, gave him a kick and shove that sent him sprawling on his face in the hall-way.

At the moment that Barker bent over his prostrate antagonist, one of the latter's friends started forward and was drawing back his arm preparatory to launching a terrific blow at Barker, when a hand was laid on his arm and he caught the glint and felt the touch of cold steel against his cheek, as Charlie, with a dangerous look in his eyes, said quietly, "Please don't!"

With a sickly smile the man dropped his arm quickly and in a voice which he tried to make humorous, replied, "I won't. I never could refuse a man a favor, Pardner."

The other comrades of the discomfited bully were held in check by the demonstrations of Barker's friends, while Russell himself, after muttering many dire threats, slunk away without again offering to return to the room.

As Barker reascended the platform he was met with a perfect storm of applause and he finished his speech to one of the most appreciative audiences he ever addressed.

The papers of both parties aside from the "Chronicle" were full of ridicule and sneering comments on this "Salvation Army—Patent Medicine style of campaigning," adopted by the Gordon men, and they were not without marked effect. Much to Barker's surprise too, his opponents copied after his plan in some respects.

All the windows and conspicuous places that could be secured were placarded with pictures of their candidate, with inscriptions on them as follows: "For Mayor. Just plain John Baxter," at the top, and underneath, *He does not have* to be labelled, for people to know he is honest."

Caricatures of Gordon with a woe-begone look were placed under, or beside the pictures of Gordon which his friends had posted, and on these

were inscribed, "Tom Gordon as he will look after taking his Primary medicine." "He will have lost his honesty, and lost the election!"

Barker did not lose sight of the fact that the great need of his side was organization.

This required unceasing labor, a thorough grasp of all details, and the quality of infecting his fellows with a species of enthusiasm that never tired or faltered.

Truly, "There's no rest for the wicked," and the same is true of politicians, though many might think the terms synonymous. While Barker got the lion's share of the abuse, he received the same share of praise. His partisans alternated their mayoralty yell with one laudatory of Barker.

Though Barker met Irene at times, at social gatherings, only the barest civilities were exchanged and yet the desire to see and speak to her was ever present with him. Night after night when his arduous day's work was done he would close his desk and wander out the broad avenue, under the overarching elms, past the magnificent homes sitting back in aristocratic seclusion among the stately trees, and endeavoring to deceive himself with the idea that the beauty of the scene had a quieting, restful influence upon him. After passing the Judge's residence, however, his inquietude ceased, it appeared, and he immediately retraced his steps.

Barker fought against this weakness in vain for sometime, but was cured in an unexpected manner. It was after eleven o'clock one night and the moon was shining brightly, when he found himself leaning over Judge Henley's gate. Though hardly conscious of the fact, his gaze was directed towards the house with such fixity and longing that it seemed only natural, when after a short time Irene appeared at the window and stared out into the night.

Still but dimly conscious of what he was doing, Barker opened the gate and advanced slowly up the walk, keeping his gaze fixed on Irene the while. She seemed to shrink back a little and then again resumed her former position for a moment, when with a peculiar indescribable gesture she turned from the window as if to leave the room. Barker stopped and was standing expectantly with his whole being strung up to the highest pitch when he was saluted gruffly with: "Who are you, Sir, and what are you doing here?"

Barker turned, the blood pounding in his temples. No word came to his lips.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" the Judge exclaimed. "I knew you were a poser and a demagogue, Barker, I didn't know you were a sneak."

Barker found his voice. The words came haltingly, but with the ring of sincerity. "I—I beg

your pardon, Judge. I wanted to see—Irene, and acted on the impulse.”

“Huh!” was the only reply the Judge made as he strode past him and there were anger, contempt, and, could it be possible, a little sympathy conveyed in the expressive grunt.

As the Judge mounted the steps and Barker was just turning to leave, the door was thrown open quickly and there were surprise and disappointment expressed in the voice which exclaimed: “Why, Father, is it you?”

Humiliated, yet thrilled with the recollection of that voice, Barker was completely engrossed in his thoughts. As he reached the most unfrequented part of the street he was rudely awakened by being caught forcibly by the shoulder and swung half way around as he was accosted by a large, powerful man with the remark: “Say, Mister Man, I want to see you a minute.”

“I guess you are mistaken in your man,” Barker replied quietly.

“Oh, I know youse allright, allright. Youse showed me once how to rush the growler, when I was full a plenty, now I’m goin’ to show youse how to bark a Barker.”

“Don’t be a fool, Russell.”

“Its youse thats the fool, if youse think I ain’t got it in for youse good and plenty, and when I gits through with youse it’ll be youse for the hos-

pital, See?" With the last word he aimed a sledge hammer blow at Barker, which he fortunately succeeded in warding off.

There was nothing to do but run or fight and Barker was not inclined to do the former so they went at it hammer and tongs.

By warding and dodging, Barker succeeded in protecting his face fairly well, but some of the blows reached his body with almost force enough to crush the ribs. He was not idle himself, however, and his knuckles were soon skinned and bleeding from the effects of the blows he returned for those he received from the fighting bully. Russell's mouth and nose were bleeding freely, in a short time, from the effects of the punishment he was receiving and one eye was so swollen and bruised as to indicate that it would soon go into mourning. Though the cooler and more scientific of the two, Barker was hardly the equal of his opponent in endurance.

They broke away from each other finally, apparently from sheer exhaustion and stood for a few moments panting and gasping for breath, when with a savage snarl, Russell lowered his head and sprang upon Barker with tiger-like ferocity and endeavored to clinch him around the body under the arms.

Though taken by surprise, Barker, almost intuitively, with lightning quickness caught him by the

right wrist with his left hand and the back of the elbow with the other, just as Russell with his left arm around his body and his leg thrown behind Barker's, backheeled him and sent him hurling to the ground. As they were falling, Barker by a supreme effort twisted his opponent's wrist and elbow outward with all his power—there was a forcible snap and his antagonist's grip relaxed as he gasped out, "Enough! You've broken me arm."

Rolling the man over, Barker regained his feet and retaining his grasp on the defeated and now thoroughly cowed bully also assisted him to arise. On examining Russell, Barker came to the conclusion that there was nothing worse than a dislocated shoulder.

"I ought to turn you over to the police, Russell," he said sternly, "but if you're sure you've got enough and will keep your mouth shut about this matter, I'll let you go."

"Youse can bet your life," was the reply. "I'm not fool enough to blow it. If anybody else wants to get even with youse and make some easy money by given youse a lay off, he's welcome to de job. As fer me, I'm fer youse after this. Now I'm fer de hospital. I fell off a beer wagon an' caved in me shoulder."

Sore and bruised, but unmarked save for his hand, Barker repaired to his room conning over Russell's remark about the "easy money."

CHAPTER XXVI

A TEST OF LOYALTY.

The information possessed by managing politicians in reference to the private affairs and the influences that will probably govern the actions of some particular person, whom they may want to reach, is often a source of mystery to the uninitiated.

George Benson, father of Alice, had some years previously been a prosperous merchant, but had met reverses during the time of the panic and was now a bookkeeper at a salary of fifteen hundred a year. His family stood high socially and he had great ambitions for Alice, and had been very much opposed to her engagement to Marston, who though of good social position was poor. Furthermore, he did not consider the occupation of newspaper reporter either dignified or remunerative enough to justify him in aspiring to his daughter's hand.

Though Mr. Benson's opposition had finally been withdrawn in deference to Alice's feelings, Marston knew well the light in which he was regarded, and that had been the prime reason that he was now

trying to fit himself for the practice of medicine while carrying on his other work. It was the thought of how much the few hundred that Hartman had offered him, would aid him in acquiring his medical education that first made him hesitate in rejecting that bribe. In view of the relations which he occupied to Mr. Benson it can readily be understood what a great satisfaction it would have been to Charlie to be able to place Alice's father under special obligations to himself.

Marston's activity in every way in which he could aid the cause of Gordon together with his extensive acquaintance and thorough familiarity with machine politics made him an invaluable aid to Barker, and he soon became recognized as his principal lieutenant.

Though not guilty of any overtly dishonest act, he was tireless in ferreting out the secrets of their opponents, and he and Barker resorted to every legitimate strategy known to practical politicians to thwart their plans.

One day while at the City Hall he was hailed by the Director of Public Works as he was passing his door, with a cheery, "Hello! Marston. Come in a minute, I want to talk with you."

Wondering and a little perturbed, for in the strenuous conditions existing, he hardly knew what to expect at the hands of the city officials, he responded, "All right, Mr. Buxton."

Declining the seat which was pushed towards him and standing with his hand on the back of the chair, he waited expectantly, and, noting a hesitancy on the part of the Director, queried a little impatiently, "Well?"

"Well, to begin with, Marston, what I have to say to you is absolutely private and not for publication." Receiving an affirmative nod, he continued, "Evans, the chief clerk in the water works, has resigned to take effect the first of April to accept the position of cashier in the new trust company. The place pays \$2,500 a year, and George Benson would be an excellent man for the position. The Mayor will appoint him on two conditions. First, that you ask it of him, and secondly, that Baxter receives the nomination at the primaries on the 28th. Furthermore, I will guarantee that if either our candidate or Baxter is elected Benson will be allowed to retain his position—Wait now," he added, as Charlie attempted to speak. "The Mayor is anxious to do you a favor for some fancied service, and if you do not make the request the appointment will go somewhere else. All the influence that Benson could bring to bear would not have the slightest effect."

Marston was conscious that he ought to feel indignant, but the indignation would not come at his summons. With a weak attempt, however, to assert his manhood he said hesitatingly, "But, Mr.

Buxton, that looks like an attempt to get me to withdraw my opposition to ——”

“Stop there, Marston,” the Director said briskly, rising and moving toward the door as an indication that the interview was at an end. “There is no use going into analysis of motives. I have an idea that this appointment would mean a good deal to Benson and his family. Think it over. The sooner you see the Mayor about it, however, the better, as it will not be kept open long.”

The modern politician has improved on Job’s proverb of “Oh, that mine enemy would write a book” to “Oh, that mine enemy would ask me a favor.”

When he called on Alice that evening, she cuddled up to him and gliding her arm around his neck, coaxingly, said with her most appealing look and smile, “I am going to ask a favor of you, Charlie, and I want you to promise me beforehand you will grant it.”

Taking it for granted that it was some trivial matter, he returned her caress with more than ordinary fondness, as he replied, “Of course I will, dear, if I possibly can.”

“You dear old boy,” accompanied by a loving hug. “Well, Mr. Buxton told Papa today that the Mayor would appoint him Chief Clerk of the Water Works if you would make the request of him. He said the Mayor made that a condition because he

knew how close you were to our family and he wanted to get even with you for something you had done for him. Of course, Papa is too proud to ask you himself, but he seemed pleased when I told him I would do it. You will ask him, won't you, Charlie? You know how happy it would make us all," she added wistfully, as she noted the look of dismay and distress upon his face.

"I—I hardly know what to say," he stammered. "Can't you see what it means to me, Alice, to ask such a favor?"

"Oh, you promised! You promised!" she cried.

"But I did not know what you meant. I said, if I possibly could. How can I possibly do this thing? It would not be honorable."

"I told Papa I knew you would, and we were all so happy over it. Now you refuse," and the big tears began rolling down her cheeks, then with a heart-breaking cry, she threw herself into the corner of the sofa as she sobbed out, "Oh, how can I tell Papa?"

Her grief and disappointment distressed Mars-ton beyond measure. He made a desperate effort to make Alice view the matter in his light, but with little success.

Not having the courage to rob her of all hope, he temporized by promising to still further consider the matter.

Returning down town and seeing a light still

shining in Barker's office, he naturally turned to him for advice and comfort. The latter's face took on a look of serious concern as he listened to the story. He realized, better than Marston could tell him, the great temptation to which he had been subjected. He knew, too, that although Marston had gone into the fight in behalf of the people, heart and soul, that it was his friendship for Barker himself that was the predominating influence with him. Could he afford to urge him to pursue a course that might alienate Charlie and Alice permanently from each other, and possibly wreck the life of one or both for the mere chance of winning the fight of the people?

Was the sacrifice of the best friend he had on earth incumbent upon him? His heart revolted at it, and yet how unutterably lonely it would be for him to go on his way alone, without the aid and companionship of Marston. As he contemplated these alternatives, a great sadness crept over him and dropping his head on his hands, an involuntary groan escaped him, wrung from his tortured spirit.

Marston sprang to his feet, and crossing over laid his hand on Barker's shoulder, as he exclaimed, "What's the matter, old man? You didn't think I was going back on you? Not if the Court knows itself. I'll stay by you till the lights go out."

Barker raised his head with a sad but rather shamefaced smile, "I guess I've lost my grip,

Charlie. I did not doubt your loyalty. I was only questioning my own to you. This is a question that you must decide for yourself."

"Oh, come off, Bob. I know what's right, of course. The trouble is I didn't have nerve enough to do it. The devil has been making a regular shuttle-cock of me the last few hours, and I couldn't make up my mind whether I wanted to be played with or not."

"I know it's been a tough experience, Charlie."

"Yes, but I've learned enough to know that you can't always have your medicine furnished you in capsules or sugar-coated tablets. There's one thing, though, I haven't got the courage to face Alice again. I'll write her a note."

Sitting down to the desk he wrote:

"Dear Alice:—After thinking it over I can't possibly do what you ask. It would not be square with Bob, with the people, or with myself. I'm awfully sorry, but you'll see it's the only thing for me to do, when you study it over carefully. Write and tell me you forgive me for disappointing you so.

Yours lovingly, but not despairingly,
CHARLIE."

Having read it to Barker, he remarked with an effort to appear humorous, "When she gets that, there will be one house in the city, when I come

around, that will hang out the placard, 'Not at home!' It will be 'Good-bye, Charlie,' for me." His voice trembled and his throat worked convulsively, while he batted his eyes vigorously to keep back the tears, as, springing to his feet, he walked across to the window exclaiming angrily: "Oh, hell! I didn't know I was such a baby."

After the first outburst of grief and disappointment which Alice experienced upon the receipt of Charlie's note, anger took possession of her, and she wrote her reply in this spirit. She considered it a masterpiece of irony. It read:

"Mr. Charles Marston,

Dear Sir:—Your favor is at hand. I am glad to hear that you are not despairing. Indeed, how could you be when wedded to Mr. Barker, yourself, and the dear people? Hereafter, our paths will lie in different directions, and should they accidentally cross I would regard it as a great favor if you would act as if we had never met. I assure you there will be no transgression in this respect, by

Yours respectfully,

ALICE BENSON."

Returning to her room after this effort, Alice divided her time between railing at Charlie and crying in a broken hearted manner.

During the next few days even Irene and Susie

got but a fleeting glimpse of Alice, and then she was so changed they could only talk to her in the most constrained manner. Charlie, on his part, was so gloomy, listless and cynical that he bid fair to undo much of the good work he had already done.

Several days had elapsed when he received a visit from Mr. Benson. "I wish, Marston, you would go out and see Alice," he said abruptly. "She has been nearly crying her eyes out, and I'm afraid will make herself sick."

"Did she say she wanted to see me?" he asked eagerly.

"No, but you go out and stay till she does see you. I am glad," he continued, "that you acted as you did. I can see now it was nothing but a bribe, and after such an exposition of the methods being resorted to, I am going to do all I can for Gordon."

"Good for you! Mr. Benson," Marston cried enthusiastically. "I don't believe you'll lose anything by it, if we elect Gordon, and we're going to make a desperate effort to do it."

When Alice came into the room on the announcement that a gentleman wished to see her, a look of joy flashed across her face as she recognized her visitor, but it hardened on the instant and she was the picture of hauteur as she enquired coldly, "To what am I indebted for the honor of this visit, Mr. Marston?"

Charlie had risen impulsively to his feet to meet her, but as she spoke, checked himself, as he replied sadly but with decision, "I see I was mistaken, Alice. Pardon me," and turned to leave the room. On reaching the door he heard a little choking sob and looking back saw Alice with her hands extended, as she wailed like a hurt child: "Oh, Charlie, don't you love me any more?"

The next moment she was in his arms, sobbing and laughing, with her arms round his neck and her face upturned to his.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE OPPOSING MANAGERS MEET.

It was right in the heat of the campaign when Barker received a telephone call from Myers, the Baxter manager, enquiring if he would be around the Great Northern Hotel about eleven o'clock.

"I can be," was the response.

"All right, I would like to have a little talk with you if you happen to drop in there this morning."

On meeting, they exchanged fairly cordial, but rather indifferent greetings, as it appeared to the onlookers, and, engaging in a desultory conversation, they gradually drifted over to a secluded portion of the lobby. As they sank back into the richly upholstered leather chairs they studied each other covertly.

Myers, the acknowledged local Boss of the party, was of medium height, quite portly, with a full broad, perfectly colorless face, firm drawn lips, heavy jaw, and a soft caressing voice that had the peculiar quality of being seemingly confidential. He was not a free talker, but rather seemed to be always seeking the advice of others.

Most men, knowing his reputation, went into his

presence with the idea that they were dealing with a master of trickery, but usually left him with a feeling of added self-importance and a more charitable view, if not an actual liking and admiration for him. He seemed to know almost intuitively just what tone and sentiment would most appeal to his hearer.

This was his usual attitude, but he could be decisive and dictatorial enough when occasion required. His motto was: "Conciliate him, if you can, hit him over the head, if you must."

As they settled back in their seats, Barker immediately got down to business by saying: "Well, what is it?"

Myers smiled genially as he replied: "You have given me a great deal of worry lately, Barker, and I want to see if I can't stop it. The party is getting all split up over this mayoralty fight. I'm afraid we won't be able to get together and win after the nomination is made."

"That can be very easily fixed," was the reply.

"How?"

"Stop fighting."

"You're inclined to be a little jocular, but that is just what I want you to do."

"That's modest. Why not take your own medicine?"

"You know a doctor never takes his own medicine," was the laughing reply.

"You know how I am fixed, Barker," he continued, "and that I've got the organization behind me, so that there's no reasonable chance of your winning out against me; but I want to keep the party in good shape, and I'm willing to satisfy you. You're the kind of a man I want with me instead of against me."

"I have no particular desire to fight you if I can get what I want without fighting."

"Good; now we can get down to business. You know I don't care much about state or national politics, but I've fought hard for control of the city politics and I want to keep it. Holmes is a weak sister and I'm under no obligations to him. If you'll quietly lie down or get your man off the track, I'll make Holmes a one-termmer, and you can have the nomination next year for Congress. That's your field, you are simply wasting your time dabbling in city politics. You'll have a cinch on the nomination; working together, there's nothing can touch us. What do you say?"

Barker stretching out his limbs and putting his hands in his pockets stared out into vacancy. The proposition opened up a new vista to him, and as he gazed down it and noted where it might lead him it became more and more enchanting to the view.

Several times Gordon had expressed his regret to Barker that he had allowed himself to become a

candidate and he knew that a mere suggestion from himself would cause his withdrawal.

A congressional career appealed to him with telling force, as, without undue egotism, he felt himself specially fitted by temperament and equipment to adorn the halls of Congress. He also felt embittered against Colonel Holmes for his grudging and merely perfunctory aid extended in the Franchise contest, and his absolutely neutral stand on the Mayoralty fight. He felt that this was the basest ingratitude, for it was a well recognized fact that he owed his election to Barker's energetic fight on the Franchise bill.

Last, but not least, was the feeling that with the prominence accruing from such a position he could almost demand Judge Henley's consent to a marriage with his daughter, for whom he knew the life of a congressman's wife would have many attractions. Then came the thought, like a shock—would she desire it? Would he desire it himself, if it was to be secured at any expense of his self-respect?

Myers watched him narrowly and a satisfied expression began to creep over his face as he became more and more satisfied from the continued silence that he had landed his fish.

A minute must have elapsed before Barker shook himself and straightening up in his seat with a long sighing respiration, said, "I thought you were

going to propose some sort of a pledge for your candidate on the Blanket Franchise matter. Your proposition is not satisfactory."

"You needn't worry about that; our folks will make pledges that will satisfy the majority of the people, so that we can let you down easy on that score."

"Nothing will do but an absolute pledge to the public to stand for eight tickets for a quarter, and to veto any ordinance providing for less than that," Barker answered emphatically, as he arose.

"Oh, come, Barker," and Myers laid his hand coaxingly on his arm, "don't act foolishly in this matter; you know such a pledge is out of the question. Why not do as I ask? I like you, I want to work with you; and if you get to Congress you can go after anything in sight. What's the use of spoiling your whole future for a mere sentiment that can't win anyway?"

"It's no use, Myers, those are the only conditions."

A steely glint came into Myers eyes and his heavy jaws came together almost with a snap, as holding out his hand as a parting salutation, he asked, "It's war then, is it?"

"It looks that way," Barker replied, as he took the extended hand.

"Well, you don't want to forget that politics is

my business," and there was an unmistakable threat in the tone.

He looked straight into Myers' eyes as their hands fell apart, and his voice was cool, almost careless, as he responded: "I propose to put you out of the business."

That same evening the Baxter organ had an article headed:

"THE CAT IS OUT OF THE BAG.

BARKER'S ACTIVITY EXPLAINED."..

"The Leader has learned from a source which it considers entirely reliable that one of Barker's most intimate friends in a confidential conversation, said: 'The real secret of Barker's activity in politics is due to the fact that he expects to build up an organization, with the aid of the city administration, if he succeeds in nominating and electing his candidate, to defeat Colonel Holmes for re-nomination next year and succeed that gentleman himself.'

"Mr. Barker is ambitious, if anything, but in this instance, to use a homely phrase, it looks as if he were trying to bite off more than he can chew."

All the papers with the exception of the "Chronicle" made much of this purported exposure of Barker's purposes and rang the changes upon it in

every conceivable shape, with the result that Colonel Holmes' friends were immediately up in arms.

A reporter tried to interview Barker in reference to the matter, but he declined to talk, merely remarking: "You had better ask Myers, maybe he can tell you something about it."

"The Leader" published this, and also an interview with Myers:

"'I do not see,' Mr. Myers said, 'why Mr. Barker should apply to me for a certificate of character. I have no means of knowing what his ambitions are or may be, though I know him to be a very ambitious young man.

"'I have understood that he has declared his intention of putting one of our present leaders out of the business, whether that refers to Col. Holmes or not, I must leave the public to judge.

"'There are some men who seem to think the only requisite necessary for a congressman is to have the gift of gab; and it may be that Mr. Barker feels that he has a special call in that direction.'"

The following day glaring announcements were made that:

"Hon. A. B. Holmes, our eloquent and respected Congressman, will address the citizens on Thursday night at the Grand Opera House, in behalf of the candidacy of Hon. John A. Baxter for the mayoralty nomination."

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE TRIAL OF THE STRIKE RIOTER.

Irene received some inkling of the inside workings of politics, when as she was sitting in the library with her father the evening of the Barker-Myers conference, Milligan was ushered into their presence.

"Well, how are things going?" the Judge asked.

"They are not going at all," was the reply. "Myers tried him on the congressional nomination, you know that was Marcan's idea, but it was no go. He says he's got two or three other cards to play, but I haven't much faith in them."

"Why don't they go to work and beat him?" the Judge said testily. "What do they want to try to placate him for?"

"That's one good thing about this business today. Myers is so mad he can hardly see straight, and he's scared besides, so we can depend on him going the whole length; and he's the shrewdest politician in town."

The Judge frowned and blurted out, as if in spite of himself, "Yes, except ——"

"Yes, we'll have to except him, and one thing that makes him so strong is, that hardly anybody regards him as a politician."

"Him," could only mean one person to Irene, and the blood was mounting to her face as she arose and excused herself in order to relieve them of any further constraint.

Barker did not, of course, relish the clever manner in which the tables had been turned upon him, but simply fought the harder to try and counteract the defection of the Holmes followers.

He realized as probably no one else did, how evenly balanced the two forces were, and that probably the slightest mistake would turn the balance against him. It was just at this period that the crisis came.

The strike at the Bellevue Mills that had started in with so much excitement had almost immediately subsided and the people had nearly stopped thinking and talking about it. The employers had not been idle, however, and a few days before had imported a large number of men to take the strikers' places.

This was the signal for renewed excitement, which had culminated in a regular riotous demonstration against the new employees. The leader of the rioters had been arrested and was held for trial.

The pledge which Barker had made before the

Judge, that if his clients violated the law he himself would volunteer to aid in their prosecution, was now recalled. The opposition papers, one and all, referred to the matter and wondered if he would keep his promise, or whether it was one of those, so common to politicians, made for mere buncombe.

The people, especially the Gordon supporters, were almost universally in sympathy with the strikers and very bitter against the "scabs."

Barker fully understood this and the disastrous effect it would have upon Gordon's campaign for him to engage in the prosecution of this man.

While still undecided as to what course to pursue, he bethought himself of an invitation to a society affair that night and eagerly seized upon it as a pretext for deferring his decision and for distracting his thoughts from the question.

Irene was present, and noting his troubled and preoccupied air with the insight given only to the eyes of love, saw at a glance that he was in deep trouble. She had never approached him privately since the night of his declaration of love, though the temptation had often been well-nigh irresistible, but tonight she could restrain herself no longer, and, taking a seat beside him, much to his surprise, inquired in a bantering tone, in which the earnestness was but thinly disguised, "Why so sad, Mr. Barker?"

"Do you really want to know, Irene?"

"Certainly, if it is proper that I should." There was no question as to her seriousness now.

He told her of the position in which he was placed. When he had finished, she said: "Well?" and there was surprise expressed in her voice as well as in the look she turned on him, wondering that the question was necessary.

"I understand that the Judge is to defend him, Irene."

"Oh-h!" The exclamation was long drawn out as all at once it dawned upon her all the possibilities, in every direction, of the proposed action.

"Well?" and now his eyes were searching hers.

For several moments she sat silent and her labored, spasmodic breathing told of the struggle going on within her, as it was brought home to her all that it meant to have her father and Robert pitted against each other again; then she raised her eyes to his and the unspoken thoughts of weeks of silence were written in their depths, as she answered in a low voice, "How many fight for honors, how few for honor."

His hand encircled hers which was lying in her lap, as he responded: "My decision is made, Irene."

The look which she gave him as she arose went far towards compensating him for the sacrifice.

When he announced his intention the next morning he was met with a storm of protest.

"If your default in the matter should result in the escape of the man from punishment,' urged Galvin, "there might be some reason for you to feel bound by your perfunctory pledge, but as we have a competent Prosecuting Attorney it does not seem right that you should jeopardize the interests of so many others. Interests, too, of such magnitude that it would simply be absurdly quixotic to sacrifice them for mere sentiment."

"Good Heavens! Man!" Barker returned irritably, "haven't I gone all over that a thousand times? Do you suppose I don't realize what the result may be? It nearly sets me crazy, but I've given my pledge to prosecute this man, and I'm going to do it, come what may."

"Well I can tell you one thing, Mr. Barker," Stewart exclaimed indignantly, "If you are going to throw us down in that way, we part company right here. I wouldn't give a tinker's damn for a man that won't stand by his friends when they need him."

Barker arose and transfixed him with a gaze that he could not withstand as he replied with dangerous calmness, "That will do, Sir. You will find the door right behind you, and please see to it that you do not enter it again, unless it be to make an apology."

As the door closed on the angry and discomfited labor leader, Barker turned to Galvin enquiringly.

"How is it with you? Are you for me or against me? I want no half way support."

"I'm with you, Barker, to the finish. Strike or no strike. Mayor or no Mayor," was the energetic response.

"Thank you." And Barker's hand dropped lightly on Galvin's shoulder while his face lighted up with one of those rare, magnetic smiles which bound men to him as with hooks of steel.

"It beats the world how these things shape up," Galvin philosophized. "Here we thought we had this strike well in hand when this trouble breaks out all of a sudden and promises to knock us out, both on the strike and the mayoralty. The worst of it is, that this man is strange to us. He claims to be one of our men, but I don't know him, or haven't found any one that does."

Stewart was just in the mood to fall an easy prey to one of Milligan's many emissaries and it was only a short time until he was ushered into the Manager's presence. Under the latter's adroit and sympathetic questioning he soon unbosomed himself of his grievances. When he concluded Milligan remarked:

"Well, Stewart, I'm glad that you've sized up Barker right at last. It has been plain to plenty of us, for some time, that Barker is for Barker. It's hard to make workingmen believe that a man in my position has any genuine interest in their

welfare but it's true nevertheless. So far as the railway is concerned it is my business to run it to make money and if this lower fare were to go through the employes would have to bear the brunt of it. It would have to come out of the men's wages. And that is the reason I am so opposed to it. I don't mind telling you in confidence that I have been in sympathy with you men in your strike and it was I that arranged that Hickey should have counsel."

"That was very good of you, Mr. Milligan, and I want to thank you for what you have done for us."

"Oh, that's all right, I want to do more," and walking to the safe he returned with a roll of bills in his hand. "Here are two hundred dollars, Stewart," forcing them into his hand, "and I want you to take it and use it as you see fit, but don't let it get into the papers. It would get me into hot water with the mill owners if you did."

Jocularly disclaiming any thanks, he almost pushed Stewart from his office with a cordial invitation to call on him at any time.

The feeling of elation with which Stewart left Milligan's office was but transitory, as he soon came to the realization that he had been bought and paid for. As he moved along the street he wondered how many had seen him enter the Manager's office and if they were not now guessing what had been his price. All at once he braced

himself, and with the exclamation: "By Godfrey, I'll be a man," with a step once more springy and elastic made his way to Barker's office.

"I've come to apologize to you, Mr. Barker," he said, as he opened the door, "and I want you to count me with you."

Barker wheeled round in his chair and looked at him steadily. "Sure?"

"Yes, sure." And he met the gaze bravely, though his face reddened.

"I believe you, Stewart. I've been through the mill myself. Let's make our work show," and he held out his hand which Stewart grasped fervently.

The money was returned to Milligan by messenger with a note explaining that upon reflection it could not be accepted.

The Police Prosecutor who was a candidate for re-election was glad to receive Barker's offer of assistance and turned the whole case over to him, except just such things as he was required to do by law on account of his official position.

Every paper in the city that had been wondering whether Barker would carry out his solemn pledge, now never mentioned pledge, but congratulated the workingmen that they had at last been enabled to discover the hypocrisy of this man, who had been posing as the special friend and champion of labor.

After entering the case, Barker determined to

leave no stone unturned to convict the rioter and visited the mills to interview the workmen in order to get his evidence in shape. As he was turning to leave the mill, a man who had overheard a part of his talk with some of the men, addressed him in a low tone. "Say, Mister, do you know how Joe Hickey is gettin' along?"

"You mean the man arrested for rioting?"

"Sure."

"It looks as if he were in a pretty tight place. Do you know him?"

"Well, I should say I did, seein' as how we come here from Chicago together last week."

Barker's interest in the man's story was intense, and he lost no time in calling Galvin and Stewart into consultation in reference to it. The outcome was a telegram to the president of the Chicago Trades and Labor Assembly. The reply was prompt. His presence was arranged for at the trial, and subpoenas were issued for the Superintendent of the mill and for T. P. Scott, the employe who had conversed with Barker.

A few hours later the Prosecutor 'phoned Barker that the Superintendent had asked him to enter a *nolle prosequi* in the case, as they did not want to intensify public feeling by prosecuting the man. Barker insisted so strenuously, however, on going on with the case that the Prosecutor was obliged to give way.

The trial proceeded promptly. The jury was made up largely of workingmen, with whom both of the attorneys were willing to trust their interests.

The court room was crowded to its full capacity, mainly with strikers, and by tacit consent the result of the trial was to be construed to mean their success or failure. In this state of feeling it is not surprising that many bitter criticisms were indulged in concerning Barker's course, though so many of his critics were ready to swear by him only a few days previously.

Witnesses were examined to prove the assault and to identify the prisoner at the bar as the leader of the assaulting party.

Thomas P. Scott was then put upon the stand by Barker.

"Where do you work?"

"At the Bellevue Mills."

"Do you know the prisoner at the bar?"

"I should think I ought to, seein' as how he got me to come here with him from Chicago last week."

"Did you know there was a strike here when you came?"

"I did not,——"

"You say you came here with Hickey. Did he also work at the Bellevue Mills with you?"

"Yes, Sir."

"When did he quit work?"

"The day before the riot."

"Do you know the reason of his ceasing work?"

"I only know what he told me."

Judge Henley started to his feet, "I object. The defendant is being tried for rioting, not for working or quitting work."

"May it please the Court," Robert said suavely, "I propose to show by the witness that the riot was premeditated and was not a matter of impulse."

"Anything bearing on the inception or motive instigating the riotous action charged is competent testimony," the Court ruled.

"Will you please tell the Court just what conversation passed between you and Hickey in relation to this matter?"

"Well, a day or two after we come here and went to work I seen Hickey talkin' to a one-armed man with a long, black mustache."—This was immediately recognized as Walters, Meyers' principal lieutenant.—"When he went away Hickey says to me, 'This is too slow business for me, I'm going to make a stake out of this. . A man's a fool to work when he can make more money without it.'"

"'That's all right,' I says, 'but how you goin' to do it?'"

"'I'm going to see the old man,—that's the Superintendent, you know'—he says, 'and see how much he'll give me to break this strike. They

ain't doin' any good now, the fellows on the outside git the fellows away 'bout as fast as the company gits them in.'

"'Yes, you'll break it,'" says I, 'then the **company** will give you the old man's place.'

"'Don't make any mistake, Scott,'" says he, 'I know what I'm talking about,' and with that he left me to look up the Boss."

"And did you have any subsequent conversation?"

"Yes. The next day he comes to me and says: 'I seen the old man yesterday and I says to him, You'll never break this strike the way you're goin', the men's gettin' way from you 'bout as fast as they come in.

"'We wouldn't have any trouble,' he says, 'if we could get the right sort of police protection. The men are half-scared to death all the time, and the pickets the strikers have out nab our fellows and coax 'em off whenever one gets out on the street. They're afraid,' he says, 'to refuse.'

"'Well,' says Hickey, 'I told him he ought to get more police,' and he swore they wouldnt give him any unless there was some violence, and the strikers was too damned smart for that.

"Then Hickey he told him if he 'would give him his regular wages and a hundred dollars besides, he'd guarantee that the Mayor'd detail all the police that he wanted.'

"Hickey says that the old man kind o' hung back for awhile, but he agreed to it after awhile, but didn't want to know how it was to be done, and told him he could take a man with him; that's the way he come to ask me. He said there was another hundred in it besides what the Boss offered him. I didn't want any of it in mine and he's got just what I expected."

"Did he tell you how he proposed to secure this police protection?"

"Yes, his proposition was to go out and stir up some of the loafers to raise enough of a shindy to get the Mayor to detail the police."

"How could he expect to attack his fellow workmen without their recognizing him?"

"The men that's working there are nearly all strangers to each other, and the men he tackled worked in a different department."

The President of the Trade and Labor Assembly then testified that Hickey was known in Chicago as a professional scab and strike breaker and bad character generally.

The Superintendent though a very reluctant witness was forced to acknowledge that Hickey was in his employ, also his bargain with him to secure the police.

He claimed, however, that he had no idea how this was to be brought about, but thought it probable that the prisoner expected to secure such evi-

dence against the strikers as would convince the authorities of the necessity of detailing sufficient police.

It is a problem to psychologists how the heads of great corporations, who are selected by reason of their great acumen, are so totally blind to every act of bribery and rascality of their own representatives. Is it simply, that being so pure in mind and heart themselves, they cannot conceive of their agents being otherwise?

Judge Henley made a great many objections to the admission of testimony and subjected the witnesses to a severe cross examination, but this only served to accentuate the points already brought out.

Barker's address in closing was the feature of the trial. His plea for the majesty of the law and the necessity for keeping the peace, no matter how great the provocation, was very strong, but when he arraigned the prisoner for deliberately entering into a conspiracy to bring fellow workmen into disrepute and break down their cause by the basest treachery, it was so terrible in its force and earnestness that it carried the jury and the entire audience off their feet.

A verdict of guilty was rendered without delay and the prisoner was remanded for sentence. Within ten days thereafter the strike was settled by mutual concessions.

The Judge was mortified, chagrined and indignant over the developments of the trial and during its progress darted so many malevolent glances at Barker and scowled at him so fiercely, that had the latter been a timid man he would have immediately increased his life insurance.

As they were preparing to leave the Court the Judge could contain himself no longer and leaning across the table he shook his finger at Barker as he shouted: "This is just what I might have expected from *you*. It's a conspiracy, Sir, a conspiracy!"

Barker bowed with exaggerated courtesy as he answered quietly: "I am always proud, Judge, to be identified with a conspiracy which has for its object the bringing of a rascal to justice. It is unfortunate that you were not so successful in your little flirtation with Miss Organized Labor."

CHAPTER XXIX

A CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION.

As the time drew close for the primaries Barker, in addition to learning the almost unlimited power of money, learned also that the city administration was taking as active a part as if it were the primary of its own party.

In this could be seen the hand of Senator Marcan as well as the influence of the corporations. Every saloon keeper, gambler, keeper of disreputable resort, and in fact every one enjoying special privileges under the city government received the "tip" that he must vote and work against Gordon, or expect to be "pulled" and discriminated against at every opportunity.

Men tread upon each others heels in the sewers and water mains. There was a mania for public improvement. As Marcan explained: "The best gag for a poor man who is against you, is a hunk of bread and meat. If a man's your friend it makes him a shouter."

Many new appointments were made and the Mayor, rising above partisanship selected these,

mainly, from those who had been active in the cause of Gordon. This would have been commendable had it not been for the dire results following. In every instance these appointees were seized with lock jaw, or else a species of aphasia, a disease characterized by an inability to co-ordinate words, especially when the Blanket Franchise or the question of Three Cent Fare was mentioned.

The Gordon supporters were not idle, however, and they denounced this unholy and traitorous combination with such vigor as to modify to some extent its effectiveness.

Though the general trend of the campaign was favorable to Barker after the trial of the rioter, he was now confronted with an obstacle that promised to make all his work go for naught.

The campaign funds were exhausted and every effort had been made to replenish them without success. It was absolutely necessary to have workers and vehicles at the polls to get out the vote.

A great effort had been made to secure sufficient volunteer workers, but only about half the requisite number had been obtained, and unless he could find money to pay about one hundred and fifty more, defeat stared him in the face. He still kept a brave front to the public, but confided to Marston the sore straits in which he was placed and the great worry it occasioned him.

Charlie, in turn, went to Alice for sympathy, so

that the next day when the girls met and the campaign subject became a subject of discussion, Alice remarked, "Charlie says Bob is awfully worried because they have no money to pay workers on the day of the primary."

"With all the people there are in favor of a three cent fare, I'd think they'd be tumbling over each other to contribute," Susie answered with some indignation.

"They seem to have plenty of friends, but Charlie says they're long on sentiment and short on cash."

"How much does it require to run a campaign?" Irene enquired.

"I asked Charlie that and he said the Baxter men with what the Street Railroad and the other Companies were putting up, must have twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars. The Gordon men have only had about three thousand, which was given about equally—except a few little dribblets—by Gordon, Barker, and Claybourne. Oh yes, I forgot that Mr. Tomson sent them five hundred dollars. Their funds are entirely exhausted now. Charlie says if they just had a thousand dollars they'd be on Easy Street."

"I thought there were quite a number of well to do men who are supporting Mr. Gordon, and would be willing to help him," Irene remarked.

"It's as Charlie says, I suppose," Susie replied.

"They're long on sentiment. A little more cash and a few less good wishes is what Barker needs now. I despise such people."

"We don't belong to that class, do we?" Irene asked smilingly. "Why can't we help? It is as much our business as anybody's."

Susie gazed at her in amazement, the idea never having occurred to her. While Alice, clapping her hands enthusiastically, cried, "Oh, wouldn't that be glorious," but immediately her face clouded as she continued sadly, "But I have no money."

"Well, I have," Irene answered. "You know Mother left me her estate, and last fall, when I came of age, Father gave me a bank book and told me there were five thousand dollars on deposit that I could draw on whenever I pleased. I have never done so, as he always keeps me supplied with money, but I will now. You've got money, Susie, how much will you give?"

"I haven't any of my own, but I'll make Papa come down with some."

"Yes, you have. You told me your father gave you a hundred dollars for a Christmas gift, that you were saving up. We can't conduct a campaign on good wishes, you know," Irene insisted merrily, yet with such evident earnestness that the other girls entered enthusiastically into the spirit of the thing.

"All right, I'll loosen up. You can have my hun-

dred, you old Shylock," Susie answered in the same strain.

"Oh, how I wish I could do the same," Alice interjected almost tearfully. "Papa gave me fifty dollars for my spring outfit, I'll give half of that anyway."

"No, no, you shan't do anything of the kind," both the girls objected. "You know you were just telling us you did not know how you were going to get along with it."

Alice's parents were in such moderate circumstances that her proposed contribution meant very much to her.

"Yes, I will, if I have to go without a new dress all summer," she replied determinedly.

"Well, that makes a hundred and twenty-five then," said Irene, "and I'll make up the remainder of the thousand."

The girls looked at her in astonishment. "Are you in earnest, Irene, or are you crazy?" Susie asked. "I believe these three cent microbes have got into your blood and kind o' made you a little daffy."

"You mustn't do it, Irene, it's too much," interposed Alice earnestly.

"No, it isn't. It is no sacrifice on my part, while you and Susie are making real sacrifices. But what we do, at least my portion of it, must be a pro-

found secret. I would not have it known for the world."

They all entered into the arrangement with much spirit, and the excitement attendant upon such unusual proceedings furnished them a great deal of pleasure.

A man would simply have purchased a draft, but women usually feel that they are not dealing in money unless they actually see it. A thousand dollar check or draft means about the same to them as a one dollar one.

They all scrambled into Irene's phaeton, and, going to the bank, drew the thousand dollars in five dollar bills.

Then came the question of how to send it. Susie proclaimed her ability to use the typewriter and, repairing to her father's office, she ousted the regular operator with a great air of mystery, and not heeding the other girls, who were leaning expectantly over her, intensely interested, she slowly picked out on the machine:

"H. O. N. RoBert BarKer,

DeaR Sir.

Enclosed you will find One thousand Dollars contribution to your three cent campaign, from your ardent Admirers and Well Wishers

Three Little Maids Are We."

"How's that?" she asked triumphantly, as she withdrew the sheet with a flourish.

They all indulged in a hearty laugh at the appearance of the communication, and then Irene said soberly, "It will not do at all. He would suspect at once who sent it. I thought you knew something about typewriting. Let me get there, I used to write occasionally, several years ago."

Deposing Susie summarily, Irene wrote:

"Hon. Robert Barker,

Manager, Gordon Campaign.

Dear Sir:—Enclosed herewith find contribution of one thousand dollars to your campaign fund from three earnest sympathizers who desire to remain unknown."

This was enclosed with the package of money, addressed and marked important, and sent by one of Mr. Allen's clerks to be delivered directly into Robert's hands with many charges from Susie not to answer any questions.

Their reward came in the enthusiastic account which Alice received from Charlie of Barker's appreciation of the great aid they had received from their unknown friends.

As Charlie put it,—“Bob said it was the only thing that kept our campaign from falling down.”

CHAPTER XXX.

THE FINAL MEETING OF THE MAYORALTY
CAMPAIGN.

The last meeting of the Gordon Campaign was announced to be held at the St. Clair Circle, in the aristocratic Seventh Ward, the Saturday night preceding the Primaries, which were to take place on Tuesday afternoon.

The girls were at Irene's when she remarked, "Wouldn't it be splendid if we could attend the meeting Saturday night? But then there's no use to talk about it, Father would never hear of my going."

"Of course, we can go," Susie replied. "It'll be great. We'll put Alice at the Judge. He likes her, and I'll join in and make life miserable to him till he gives in."

"Yes, indeed," Alice coincided. "We mustn't miss it. I'm sure we can coax your father to let you go."

They immediately repaired to the library where they found the Judge. Susie and Alice pounced upon him and grasping him by each arm proceeded

to use all their appealing wiles and coquetry to secure his consent.

He demurred strongly at first, but finally yielded to their persuasions, saying in his characteristic manner, "Well, if you girls want to make fools of yourselves by going to hear a lot of other fools, go ahead."

"Thank you, Judge," Susie replied saucily. "I've often read, 'The biggest fool is an old'—No, I mean, 'What fools we mortals be,' but we've absorbed so much wisdom from you we'll give tone to the whole crowd."

"I knew you couldn't refuse us, Judge," Alice said sweetly, "and I'm going to give you your reward," as bending over his chair, she kissed him. "Now, aren't you glad you said yes?"

"Are there any more meetings?" he asked smiling quizzically as he took her hand and patted it—"Maybe we could arrange for them on the same terms."

"No, this winds up the campaign, but that was a reward of merit, you needn't think I'd make any contracts for future delivery," was the mischievous reply.

Irene, who had remained silent and allowed the other girls to fight her battles, also bestowed a kiss on him as she said, "Thank you, Father, I'm sure we'll enjoy it."

The girls passed the word around among their

friends and acquaintances, and the response was all that could be desired.

The picture presented far exceeded their expectations.

It being known to be the last meeting of the campaign, an immense concourse had gathered from all parts of the city.

In the vari-colored light, from the flaring torches and arc lamps, reinforced by the rays from the elegant residences which surrounded the circle, the appearance was that of a great amphitheater.

The driveway was crowded with rich equipages, whose occupants, in their attractive costumes, with their high-bred, piquant faces, added color and *eclat* to the occasion; while in the center was the swaying, shouting crowd.

The fact that most of those whose appearance added brilliancy to the gathering were not in sympathy with the object of the meeting did not detract from the enthusiasm, for what they lacked in sympathy was made up in interest in the proceedings, not to speak of the feeling that their presence was in the nature of a novelty or a "lark."

The Glee Club was in good voice, the orchestra rendered its most popular selections, and the audience fairly outdid itself in its campaign cry. The enthusiasm soon became so infectious that Susie and Alice joined in the "Rah! Rah! Rah! He! He! He! Honest Tom Gordon for the Mayor-al-tee"

with a vim and abandon that would have done credit to seasoned campaigners, and then laughed almost hysterically for allowing themselves to be so carried away with the excitement and enthusiasm of the occasion as to forget that their action was a little unusual, to say the least.

Charlie, who had joined them with Mr. Carson, whom he introduced, encouraged and led them in the demonstrations, and though Irene took no part she looked smilingly on and offered no discouragement. The greatest demonstration was reserved for the time when Robert rose to speak. It appeared to be the signal for the audience to go wild with enthusiasm. Three cheers for Barker were given with a will, and then as with one voice, the immense throng took up the chant in unison:

“Barker in the morning,
Barker too, at night,
Barker, Barker, all day long,
Barker, he’s all right.”

Which they repeated over and over again.

Susie and Alice, together with Charlie and Carson, contributed their full quota in swelling this acclaim. No man in the history of the city had ever received such an ovation as Barker did on that occasion. It is no exaggeration to say that Irene felt it more than he, and her heart consequently

went out to the audience in grateful appreciation.

Almost any man under such an inspiration could have made a good speech and Barker acquitted himself as never before. He had a magnificent figure, and his rich, sonorous and musical voice reached the uttermost limits of the immense audience without appreciable effort on his part, while his well-rounded periods, cogent argument, and deep earnestness impressed his auditors profoundly. He spoke probably for thirty minutes, and at the close a repetition of the demonstration took place even more wildly enthusiastic than the first, if that were possible.

Immediately upon the completion of his address he made his way to the girls. As they saw him approaching, Susie cried delightedly, "Barker, Barker, Barker's in sight, Barker, Barker, you're all right." By this time he had reached the carriage and was received by Alice and Susie and the gentlemen with expressions of delight and congratulation. He spoke to the others first, and then walked round to the other side of the carriage to greet Irene. Her eyes were shining, but there was a little touch of coy reserve, as she gave him her hand which trembled slightly and said, "I am delighted to see you, Mr. Barker."

For once the good angels had apparently taken possession of Susie. She imperiously demanded the attention of the others. "Just look at that leader

of the Glee Club, Alice, Charlie, Mr. Carson! Who is he?? Hasn't he got the prettiest black curls! Isn't he just the darlingest man? I declare I've fallen head over heels in love with him."

Whether understanding or appreciating the object of Susie's suddenly awakened interest in the Glee Club's young leader or no, the others laughingly entered into a discussion of his merits.

Robert kept Irene's hand imprisoned, and as he covered it over with his other, he enquired with that sort of insistence so common to lovers, "Are you really glad to see me, Irene? You are not saying that merely to be polite?"

She leaned a little more towards him and her look left no need of words.

He slipped his free hand along her arm to her shoulder and made as if to draw her to him, she shrank back startled, blushing and embarrassed, as she cried out under her breath, "Why, Robert, some one will see you."

He was trembling and the muscles in his cheek twitched. For the moment he had forgotten that they were virtually surrounded by thousands of people. In fact, the immensity of the crowd had produced upon him a feeling of isolation that would have been impossible with but few present.

"I beg your pardon, Irene, I forgot myself, but if it were not on your account, I wouldn't care if

the whole world were looking on when I ——” and he hesitated.

“When I what?” she enquired mischievously.

“Do you want me to tell you?” he asked.

“Oh, no, not if there is any mystery about it,” she answered with assumed indifference.

“Well, I’ll tell you anyhow.”

“Oh, no, not here, at least,” she said alarmed, for she was expecting the others to turn towards them at any moment.

“Where then? At your home?”

“I’m afraid not,” she said a little sadly. “You know Father is angrier than ever just now. He has never actually forbidden it, but I’m sure he would not like for me to meet you, except casually.

At this moment, Susie turned to them and said, “Well have you folks got through discussing the speech? Wasn’t it grand, Irene? Didn’t you enjoy it?”

“I thought it was very nice,” she answered.

“You seem mighty mild about it, no wonder you blush. I’d be ashamed, too, if a friend of mine made a grand speech like that, and the most I could say in its praise was, I thought it was very nice,” and she mimicked Irene’s expression.

“You think everybody ought to go wild just because you do,” chimed in Alice. “Maybe Irene wasn’t talking about the same speech you were.”

"Well, well—but still you can't blame me, I've never even had a 'Charlie boy' to give me instructions—and to think, I never even thought about there being any other speech. I certainly do need instructing."

"I should take great pleasure," said Carson, "in contributing something toward your education in that direction."

"All right, Mr. Carson, our house will be open for instruction almost any evening after seven thirty, and you might include journalism as well as speech-making in the course."

As they were driving home, Susie exclaimed, "How I would love to be a man like Robert Barker, I just think he's grand. Papa says he's like a cat, though."

"Why should your papa speak in that way of Mr. Barker?" Irene asked with a good deal of indignation.

"Because he says every time you try to throw him down he always lights on his feet."

"Oh, that's different."

"What's different? Never mind, I can't think of anything but that speech, and the crowd yelling about Barker. It just keeps ringing in my ears, and I must let it out if it raises the neighborhood." And let it out she did.

Irene leaned over and putting her arms around her gave her a convulsive squeeze and a hearty kiss

on the mouth. As she released her, Susie, opening her eyes wide in surprise, exclaimed, "Oh, I didn't know it had gone so far," and she and Alice began petting and kissing and cooing over the girl as if she had been a child.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE BAXTER MANAGER'S LAST CARD.

The last day preceding the primary was an extremely busy one for Barker and his friends in preparing for the battle.

In accordance with political usage, it was arranged that the paid-workers, amounting to about one hundred and fifty in the precincts that were not equipped with volunteer workers, should report at the Gordon headquarters on the morning of the primary to receive their pay and final instructions.

About eleven at night Barker concluded all the work in sight and had just turned to Marston, with the remark, "Thank Goodness, Charlie, everything has been done now that can be done, except our meeting with the workers in the morning," when the telephone rang sharply. He took down the receiver rather impatiently.

"Hello!"

"Is Mr. Barker there?"

"He is speaking,"

"This is Joe Babcock."

"Well, what is it?"

"Don't you know me?"

"No, I don't recall you, at present."

"I keep the 'Dew Drop Inn,' and I'm pretty near the whole thing in the eleventh ward. See?"

"Yes, I've heard of you."

"Well, the Baxter men have thrown me down. Given me the double cross, and if you are willing to do the right thing, we can carry this ward solid for Gordon."

"But I'm not able to do what you think would be the right thing. I haven't a dollar that I haven't a special place for."

"Oh, I don't want your money. I want to get even with them duffers for trying to play me for a sucker. Tom Gordon's the kind of a man that suits us people out here better than a kid-gloved feller like Baxter anyhow. You come out and see me a little while and I can put you on to a scheme so that you can just run away with this ward, and it won't cost you a cent either. Will you and your young newspaper friend, Marston, ain't it, come out?"

"Wait a minute or two, I'll see."

"What do you think, Charlie?" Barker asked, and he told him who had called up and the nature of the conversation.

"I think we had better go out, Bob," said Charlie. "Babcock is considered the political Boss of the ward, or at least that part of it called 'Hell's Half-

Acre.' He is a smooth talker, but is regarded as rather treacherous. If he believes though that he is not being dealt with fairly, he is just the kind of a man to do all he can for the other side, and the votes he can control may be sufficient to change the result."

"I don't see anything to be lost by going out to see him," responded Barker. "The principal objection I have is to visiting such a disreputable resort."

"Oh, I don't think that need bother us. I know the private entrance and he has a number of private rooms so that we won't be obliged to meet any more than we want to."

"That's the advantage of your newspaper work, Charlie. It makes you acquainted everywhere. I'll tell him we'll come right away," and he 'phoned accordingly.

As they entered the cab to take them to their destination, Marston remarked, "Thank the good Lord, Bob, this thing will soon be over. I'm anxious to have the pressure removed and the veil lifted. I don't believe I was cut out for a reformer, it's hard to keep up the pressure."

"You are not getting tired of well-doing so soon, Charlie?"

"Oh, I could be passively good for a lifetime, as most people are, but this doing well with all your might's a different proposition."

They entered the side entrance to the house in the rear and stood and gazed on the gathering assembled there,—consisting of black and white, of both sexes—with a feeling of surprise and disgust. Almost every countenance bore the marks of viciousness, dissipation and degradation, and the lewdness, revelry and debauchery presented were almost sickening.

Barker was on the point of suggesting that they leave at once, when the proprietor, who was behind the bar, catching a glimpse of them, hurried towards them.

"I am very glad to see you, gentlemen," he said as he approached. "I hope you have not been kept waiting, I did not see you when you came in. Won't you step in here? We will be more private," opening the door to one of the back rooms.

The room was furnished simply with a couple of tables and a number of chairs.

"We have but a short time to stay, Mr. Babcock," Barker replied, as they seated themselves at one of the tables, "and are anxious to get home as soon as possible."

"I understand," he answered. "We might as well be a little sociable, though, while we are together. I'll bring in some cigars and something to drink. What'll you have?"

"I will take a smoke, Mr. Babcock," said

Barker, "but you'll have to excuse me on the drink, I don't indulge."

"And you?" he asked, turning to Charlie.

"The same here," Charlie answered. "I have passed up the drink business for good."

"Well, we are three of a kind," he responded cheerily. "I never touch anything but soft drinks myself, but it always seems a little more sociable to have something. I have some splendid root beer that I keep for my own special use; it looks like lager and satisfies the boys when they insist on my taking something. Won't you have a bottle with me?"

"I guess there's no objection to that," Barker replied.

"All right, if you'll pardon me for a few moments, I'll be with you again."

Babcock soon returned with a tray on which were some cigars, glasses, and a couple of bottles of root beer. "Here we are, gentlemen," he said good-naturedly.

Opening a bottle, he emptied it into the two glasses before them, and then, opening the other, poured himself out a glass.

"You perhaps think it a little strange, Mr. Barker," he said, as he seated himself, and they lighted their cigars, "that I should send for you on a matter of this kind. I've always claimed to control this ward and I've always made good. People

have always come after me, I've never had to go after them. I don't think much of Baxter, but I didn't know Gordon at all, so when Baxter's managers wanted to know if I could deliver the goods to them this year, I told them I could and would.

"We fixed up our deal all right, and they were to come up with the 'stuff' this morning. They didn't show up, and I found out tonight that they think I've lost my grip and have made a deal with Nick Conroy, who keeps the 'Mecca,' and have given me the 'throw down.' Now, I intend to show them I'm strictly in it. They'll be the worst surprised gang tomorrow night when the votes are counted, there is on the town plat."

"What did you want to see me about?" Barker asked. "You know I told you over the 'phone that I'm not in a position to do anything for you."

"I know that all right, but I wanted to meet you and tell you how the land lays and, if we win out, I want you to give me credit and remember me. Tony Sanford is my right bower, and I wanted him to meet you, too. You know how it is. The boys like to feel that they've been up agin the real thing. It makes them fight better to know that they've been recognized by the Boss."

There was of course much more talk along the same line, during which time they had been occasionally taking a sip of the root beer, when Babcock excused himself to get Sanford to introduce him.

When Babcock, who was absent several minutes, made his reappearance with Sanford, Barker was leaning back smoking and Marston was nodding in his chair, while his cigar seemed just ready to drop from his relaxed lips.

He roused up and held out his hand to Sanford when introduced, but almost immediately began nodding again. "You will have to make allowances for Marston," Barker remarked, "we've been working hard day and night the past week and are about played out. It's about all I can do to keep awake myself."

He spoke in a phlegmatic, half-stupid way, and yawned sleepily at the close. A swift glance of intelligence was exchanged between the men.

"Yes, I suppose you are pretty well knocked up," Babcock responded.

Sanford had brought in a bottle of beer and a glass and poured himself a drink, at the same time that Babcock refilled him glass. "Here's to you, gentlemen," Sanford exclaimed, and, with a shake, Marston was aroused sufficiently to touch glasses with the others, when they all drained them of their contents.

"Will you have something more, Mr. Barker?" Babcock asked. No attention was paid to Charlie, who had now dropped his head on his arms which were lying in front of him on the table.

"No, no more, thank you. I must be getting

home or I'll be asleep before I get there. Well, Sanford, tell me about the condition of affairs in the ward, or maybe you wouldn't object to walking along with me on our way home. The fresh air will brace me up, I expect."

"No, you mustn't think of walking home," Babcock replied. "I will 'phone for a cab." He left the room for a few minutes and when he returned found Barker also with his head on the table, and Sanford reported that despite all his efforts to keep awake he had finally dropped off to sleep.

"That beats me. I never saw the 'dope' work that quick before. Do you suppose they've got too much of it?"

"They only smoked one cigar apiece, didn't they, and only had one bottle of the beer between them? That oughtn't to hurt anybody."

"No, but I don't want anything to happen them, it might cause us trouble."

"You're liable to have that anyway. This man Barker ain't the kind of a guy to let a thing of this kind pass, when he finds out what a sucker we've played him for, but it's better than using a lead pipe."

"That don't worry me much, if he comes round all right. He ain't the kind of a fellow to advertise how he's been roped in."

"Well, if he does squeal, all we need to do is to say that he came here about midnight tolerably

well corned, took a few drinks and left, and we don't know anything further about him. It will be our words against his."

"Did you get his list of committeemen and precinct workers?"

"You can bet your life I did. I was in the headquarters and had his desk open inside of ten minutes after they left, and found a typewritten list of their complete organization."

"That's good. We must get it into Myers' hands right away. He ought to be able to do business with nearly half of them, when Barker don't show up. Myers has his dodgers already printed for distribution stating that he's given up the fight and skipped out because he knew he was licked and hadn't nerve to face the music. Then we can count on fifteen or twenty Judges to switch from ten to twenty tickets each, and we ought to have a walk over."

"Oh, we've got 'em dead to rights now. He'll have to get his eye teeth cut before he can expect to go up against an old hand at the business like Myers, and win out."

"He put up a great fight, though. If he wasn't so damned honest that you can't do business with him at all, I'd rather see him win than Myers. The fellow really wants to do something for the people."

"You ain't gittin' moral, are you, Joey?"

"Not enough to hurt. But we've got to get these fellows out of here. I've got a cab waiting outside and I've telephoned Corrigan to give them a room and not allow any one to bother them till after tomorrow noon. You must go along with 'em and you and the cabby and Corrigan can get 'em up to bed."

With considerable difficulty Barker and Marston were aroused enough, so that by supporting and half carrying them they were gotten into the cab. They were then taken to a disreputable lodging house a couple of squares distant, where, with still greater difficulty, they were finally taken upstairs to a room and laid on a bed fully dressed as they were, and left in that condition.

The moment the door closed upon the men, Barker and Marston both sat up almost at the same instant, and after gazing at each other with a look of pleased surprise, with one accord burst into a low laugh not unmixed with nervousness.

"Well, are you all right, Bob?" Charlie enquired with evident relief.

"Yes, I was just going to ask the same question. You looked so thoroughly stupid and sleepy I was afraid it was real."

"Same here about you. But say, wasn't it a lucky thing we dropped on to his game? That was a happy thought of yours to exchange our beer for Babcock's while he was out, and substitute our

own cigars for his, then play the sleep racket to draw him out."

"It certainly was. This has taught me a lesson. I will try to reciprocate by giving Myers one."

"He ought to be killed, but if we get away with him on this trick, he'll be a dead one anyway. But let's get out of this."

"We will wait a little while till everything quiets down, so that we can slip out without being seen. We have lots of work to do before morning."

"What have we got to do except to get to bed? It occurs to me we have done enough for one night."

"We want to get into communication with every one of our committeemen in the city, and also get out a circular or special edition of the 'Chronicle' denying the handbills which they have evidently prepared for distribution, announcing our departure from the city."

"But we haven't departed."

"But unless we are able to reach everybody and thoroughly counteract the story, we might as well be away, or asleep, as they evidently think we are."

"You're right, Bob. I guess I must have got just about enough of that dope to fuddle me up a little. What do you propose to do to Babcock and those other fellows?"

"Nothing. What's the use? It would simply

make a scandal. I think we can get even by taking them by surprise and checkmating them."

"Right again. There's nothing makes such men respect you so much as to beat them at their own game. If the knock-out drops affect Babcock as much as he expected them to affect us, he won't trouble us much tomorrow, and will have to have some one else look after his old joint for him."

"I hope they won't do him any serious injury, as we were responsible for his taking them."

"That don't worry me any. If he gets knocked out taking his own medicine, it's his own fault, but there's no danger of that, he's too mean to kill."

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE DAY OF THE PRIMARY.

Barker and Marston slipped quietly out of the house in about a half hour, without attracting attention, and went to the "Chronicle" office immediately, to write the matter up for the morning edition.

They were impressed with the energy of the opposition by meeting men even before they got to the office distributing handbills at every door, with the following startling headlines:

A SENSATIONAL ENDING OF A SENSATIONAL CAMPAIGN.

THE GORDON BOOM COLLAPSED!

Barker and his henchman, Marston, have skipped out and left their dupes to hold the bag.

It then went on to state that Barker, seeing inevitable defeat staring him in the face had left the city, not to return until after the primary election,

and in consequence there would be much wailing and gnashing of teeth among the Gordon supporters when they found themselves deserted on the eve of the battle by their self-constituted leader.

Besides this, many of them had been promised compensation for the hard labor which they had performed and expected to perform at the polls, and when they discovered the cowardly and dishonest manner in which they had been dealt with, for the Honorable (?) Mr. Barker had absent-mindedly taken all the campaign funds with him, it was safe to promise there would be scenes enacted that would double discount the spectacular features of the campaign that would close today.

It wound up with a paraphrasing of the campaign cry, as follows:

“Barker’s gone in the morning,
Barker’s gone tonight,
Barker’ll be gone all day long,
Barker’s out of sight.”

They were not long in preparing a circular in answer to the one issued by the other side. It was headed:

“AN UNPARALLELED OUTRAGE.

THE DEPTHS OF POLITICAL DEPRAVITY
REACHED BY THE BAXTER MANAGERS.

BEWARE OF THEIR LIES ABOUT BARKER AND
MARSTON.

Barker is here and will stay here.”

Not only were many thousands of these circulars struck off, but the whole front page of the “Chronicle” was given to the matter.

Every district messenger, special delivery and newsboy that could possibly be secured was pressed into service to distribute circulars throughout the city, and also notices to the various committeemen of the conspiracy to deceive the voters, and the scheme of the Judges to defraud Gordon by the switching and palming of tickets. The letter closed with the question, “Can we depend on you to be at the polls and work for the nomination of Gordon? Answer ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ on enclosed slip and return by messenger.”

It was past four o’clock when Robert and Marston lay down to snatch a little much-needed rest, after their exciting and fatiguing night’s work. They had left instructions to be called at seven o’clock, and as soon as they could partake of a few

mouthfuls of breakfast, immediately repaired to the Gordon headquarters.

A large crowd of people had sprung up there as if by magic. The opposition morning paper had also contained on its front page a sensational article, with conspicuous headlines, describing Barker's flight from the city. This in conjunction with the "Chronicle" article and the opposing circulars had aroused intense excitement, and people had gathered for the purpose of ascertaining the truth or falsity of these respective statements.

When Barker and Marston appeared, a great shout went up, and, amid laughter and hand clapping, they were surrounded by their friends and partisans.

The complete fiasco which the Baxter managers had made in playing their final trump card not only aroused the righteous indignation of the Gordon following, but also inspired them with an enthusiasm that gave them a decided moral advantage over the Baxter workers, who were down-hearted and dispirited, and in many cases heartily shamed by the unexpected disclosures.

One active Baxter hustler remarked good-naturedly, "You can count me a Barker man after this. I'm going to get on the Band Wagon. If you fellers want to ride in the hearse, all right. Why, that man Barker can give our men all the trumps and then take every trick. He's like the

Irishman's flea. Just when you've got him down good and hard and raise your thumb to look for him, he ain't there."

His remarks seemed to strike a responsive chord and elicited numerous expressions of approval.

After meeting and greeting his co-workers, Barker devoted a couple of hours to instructing the numerous men in the duties assigned to them at the various polling places, and in compensating them for the same. He then got in a buggy and drove almost constantly during the day to the different precincts of the city.

While driving along not far from Judge Henley's residence, he descried Irene walking by herself and drew up beside her. The way her face lighted up and the cordiality of her greeting made him feel that politics were of very minor importance in comparison with some other things.

As she walked up to the curb and held out her hand, she exclaimed, "You don't know how relieved I am to see you."

"Not any greater relief to you than it is pleasure to me," he responded, still holding her hand and looking down into her eyes in a way to make her color and turn away her glance with a sweet sense of embarrassment.

"How do you happen to be driving out this way?" she asked as she slowly withdrew her hand.

"I am driving all over the city to relieve others,

besides yourself, by the knowledge of my presence. That sounds sort of egotistical, doesn't it? But my friends insisted that it was necessary."

"What made them publish such vile stories about you? I declare it's a burning shame. They talk ten times more about you than they do about the candidate."

He alighted and gave a hasty sketch of his experiences. She listened with dilated eyes, and the nervous claspings and unclaspings of her hands and irregular breathing showed the intense interest she felt in the narrative.

When he had finished, she exclaimed, "Oh, I'm so glad you escaped all right. I was so worried this morning when I read the paper I could hardly contain myself. Father didn't add to my peace of mind by some of his comments, and so after he left I felt as if I would just stifle in the house and was going over to see Alice."

"I wouldn't want to see you suffer, Irene, but it's a good deal of satisfaction to me to know that you did think of me and worry about me. I have been very busy during the campaign, but never an hour when the memory of you has not been an inspiration to me."

"Oh, I do hope you will win," she exclaimed energetically and her eyes met his in a look of complete love and trust. "I never was so interested in anything in my life."

"I wish we weren't on the street, I should like to thank you for that in a fitting manner," he answered in a meaning tone.

"Is your vocabulary more limited on the street than elsewhere?" she asked demurely.

"Not necessarily," he replied, "but words are sometimes very weak symbols of expression."

"I hardly expected that a noted speaker like yourself would make such an acknowledgement," she said smiling and dimpling mischievously. "But I must be going."

"No, no. Don't go, Irene, at least not until you tell me when I can see you again."

"Well—the first time we meet," and she laughed merrily as she turned to go.

Barker stood half-smiling, half-frowning, undecided whether to be provoked or pleased, when, looking back, she said with sweet shyness and a charming blush, "Good-bye, Robert."

The condition in which Barker found his forces as he went from point to point was extremely gratifying. They were alert, confident, and enthusiastic. It was nearing noon when he ascertained that an excursion train was to leave the city at three o'clock bearing a base ball club to a town some thirty miles distant to play a match game with the club at that place.

The club was made up of the younger men

among the striking mill workers and had an enthusiastic following.

It was announced that the train would return before seven P. M., but the party who gave him the information had received what he considered a reliable "tip" to the effect that it would be detained so that it would not return to the city until later, and those who went would consequently lose their votes at the primary. Furthermore, the whole affair had been arranged by the Baxter men, who had purchased two hundred excursion tickets at fifty cents each and had cunningly presented them to the Gordon men. Owing to the impoverished condition of the strikers, as a result of their long idleness, but few would have felt able to undergo such expenditure for mere pleasure.

Barker immediately dispatched Marston, Galvin, and Stewart, as being the best acquainted with the men and having the most influence, to look up these parties who were being deceived; to explain the plan to deprive them of their votes and in order to compensate them in a measure for missing their expected enjoyment, purchase their tickets from them at their original price.

They succeeded admirably in their undertaking, far beyond their expectations, but exceeded their instructions. Not wanting to be outdone in generosity, they presented the tickets, which they had

bought up, to the Baxter adherents, many of whom had come to witness the departure of the train and whose affiliations were made known to them through the aid of the Gordon workers.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE RETURNS FROM THE PRIMARIES.

Owing to the great excitement aroused by the strenuously fought contest, the people of both parties were intensely interested in the result, and consequently the returns were bulletined as completely and to as large a gathering as if it were a state or national election.

Through the machinations of Susie Allen, the girls had exclusive possession of her father's offices on the second floor of the "Maltby," nearly opposite "The Chronicle" and "The Leader" offices.

Though the Gordon men were the most confident, there was a large number who still had faith in the power of money and the machine.

In the beginning the returns varied, first favoring one candidate and then the other. These were received with shouts of approval or groans of derision according to the sympathies of the spectators. The girls were seated at a window, and there was no more enthusiastic applause than Susie when the bulletins favored Gordon.

The tedium was relieved between bulletins by

throwing on the screens, pictures and caricatures of the leading participants coupled with some witty or catchy sayings. After an hour or two the trend of the returns were so manifestly in favor of Gordon as to leave no doubt of his success.

The popularity of Barker was now well attested when a large picture of him was thrown upon the screen, with the simple inscription underneath: "Barker is here tonight."

This proved a signal for the Glee Club, joined by a large concourse of men and boys, marshalled by a drum major, to begin marching through the streets and up to the Gordon headquarters, singing a parody on the popular coon song of the day.

"Boom, boom, boom, I's glad dat Barker has stayed,
Boom, boom, boom, he made t'ings ah dif-fer-ent
shade,

Boom, boom, boom, 'twas Barker dat won us de
fight,

Oh, Barker, he's a white man, wid ah boom, boom,
boom."

By this time the result was a foregone conclusion and "The Leader" was only giving out the bulletins on the remainder of the ticket, while its group of spectators was slowly dissolving. The "Chronicle," quick to take advantage of the situation, queried:

"Is our esteemed contemporary, "The Leader,"
asleep as usual?"

The Gordon partisans were, on the other hand,

almost hysterical with joy, the girls, entirely carried away with enthusiasm and excitement, being no less demonstrative than the others.

The stereopticon again lighted up the great white canvas with:

"Sound the Hew gags, beat the Tom, Toms."

"No, we'll take that back, Tom can't be beat."

The laughter had hardly subsided, when the rhymer again came to the front with:

"Well, well, well, who would have thought it?

Tom Gordon, never sought it,

He couldn't have bought it,

Yet, he seems to have caught it."

Then the final returns were given:

"The twenty-one wards of the City complete:
Baxter, 9,721; Gordon, 10,816."

A life size picture of Gordon was now shown for the first time with an accompanying verse:

"We've had plenty of fun,

We've had plenty of fight,

Now, three cheers for Gordon,

And we'll say—Good night."

The cheers were given with a will, and the mass of spectators dissolved, though the marching crowds of shouting young men, with their brooms, horns, tin pans, and other implements for creating

noise, continued to break the stillness of the night with their demonstrations of victory.

"If you girls don't hold me, I'll jump out of the window," Susie exclaimed, with the Gordon cheers still ringing in her ears. "I don't see how you can keep still, Irene," and she began waltzing gayly around the room. Irene, but little less excited, smiling on her indulgently the while.

Finally, gathering up her skirts above her shapely ankles, Susie threw herself back and commenced a cake walk across the spacious office, singing as an accompaniment:

"Boom, boom, boom, ain't I glad dat Barker has stayed."

At the conclusion of each line, with a roguish twinkle in her eye, Susie would make a profound obeisance to Irene, who, the moment she finished, grasped her in her arms, laughingly exclaiming, "Oh, you silly girl," and seasoned her rebuke with an impulsive hug and several hearty kisses.

Word had been conveyed to Barker and Marston at headquarters as to where the girls were, and they now made their appearance.

Alice rushed to Charlie with an affectionate greeting. Irene advanced to meet Barker with outstretched hands, and as they rested in his, there was no effort on her part to disguise the joy and enthusiasm which she felt over the result, as she exclaimed impulsively, "I'm so glad, so glad, Robert."

"That pays for all the work and worry of the campaign, Irene."

"You have had my entire sympathy all the time," she responded with a tone and look that might have made Robert forget the presence of the others, had not Susie interrupted at this time with an appearance of petulance.

"They also serve who stand and wait,' but I'm getting tired of being a waiting maid. It isn't fair either to treat me in this way. Why didn't you bring Mr. Carson along with you, so that I could have some one to enthuse over?"

"Mr. Carson certainly regrets his inability to be present as much as you can regret his absence," Barker replied.

"Regrets are all right, but they don't prevent my being left all by my lonesome. I'm the only girl in the lot that has any life about her, too, and I've been sounding your praises both in verse and song and with both feet, only to be called 'A silly girl.' Am I not to have any reward?"

Barker released Irene's hands reluctantly, as he took Susie's extended one, and placing his other on her shoulder, bent toward her with a quizzically meaning expression, as he asked, "Shall I reward you now?"

"No, no, thank ou," recoiling slightly. "I don't care for mere lip service, and when I do, I don't want it secondhand."

"What can I do for you, then? The campaign funds are exhausted."

"You might at least, say, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into an office under the new administration.'"

"What position would you desire?"

"I was thinking of applying for a place in the street cleaning department. Papa says my new dress is the best street sweeper he ever saw."

"All right, consider yourself engaged."

In escorting the girls to the Allen carriage, which was now in waiting, Robert and Irene brought up the rear in going down stairs. Her soft, slender hand crept into his, as if by accident, and nestled there, while the touch of her person that inclined toward him, thrilled him with joy. The few low spoken words and tender glances exchanged between them were fraught with a meaning that can only be understood by lovers who are deprived of an opportunity of seeing each other alone.

Their simple, "Good-night, Robert," "Good-night, Irene," conveyed a volume of meaning, and for a time drove from their minds all remembrance of the great contest, which had just ended in Barker's favor.

There was great rejoicing among the Gordon supporters, in a quiet way for a few days, but great care was exercised not to make this offensive to the defeated faction.

Barker, aided by his friends, displayed much energy and tact in placating the disgruntled Baxter men and the opposition party, being in bad odor with the people, a comparatively easy victory was achieved, at the election.

With but one or two exceptions, all the Councilmen who had been suspected of boodling were defeated.

The Street Railway Company, being anxious to secure the passage of the Blanket Franchise, offered to make marked concessions. The people generally, were also desirous of having the vexed question settled as soon as possible, as they were anxious to reap some substantial benefit from their victory and had not the patience to wait for its full fruition. In deference to this sentiment, in the interim between the election and the inauguration of the new Mayor, the ordinance was taken up and referred to a joint committee on judiciary and street railways.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE CRUCIAL TEST.

The day this committee reference was effected, Irene, returning home from some social function near midnight, was attracted to a light shining in the library. Looking in, she saw the Judge sitting huddled down in his chair at the library table upon which was a mass of papers. Utter misery and despondency were depicted upon his features. As she gazed at him it seemed that he wore the look of an old and broken man. A sharp pang of remorse stabbed her heart as she recalled how aloof she had held herself from him of late.

Gliding into the room, she put her arm around his neck and bent over him impulsively as she enquired, "What's the matter, Father? You look as if something terrible had happened."

"Something terrible has happened," he answered, rousing and sitting more erect. "I am a ruined man, Irene. I have tried to hide it from you, but you'll have to know it sooner or later, and I might as well tell you now."

Irene started and caught her breath hard. An undefined fear stirred her deeply. Was the honored name of her father to be tarnished by the breath of dishonor and disgrace? Her mouth was dry and her lips quivered as she said huskily, "What do you mean, Father? *You* could not be guilty of doing anything that would ruin you."

"But I have. Like an egregious fool I had no doubt we would get our Franchise through, and knowing that if we did, the stock would increase greatly in value, I invested in it every dollar I could possibly raise. The stock has gone down and will keep on doing so, if the Council insists on the conditions that the people are demanding. So you see that ruin stares me in the face. I may be able to renew my notes for a time, but at the outside I can't put off the inevitable more than a few months. My creditors are pressing me and no one is willing to help."

Thus the Judge had brought home to him the truth, that capital is the most timid creature in the world and always hides in time of danger, but is as rapacious as a vulture in pouncing upon the remains of a fallen combatant.

Somewhat relieved by her father's explanation, but with her whole heart full of pity for him, she drew his head against her breast and caressed him tenderly.

"I can't think it is as bad as you say, Father,"

she said soothingly, "I'm sure something will happen in your favor."

Withdrawing from her embrace to which he had submitted gratefully, he exclaimed, "I am a complete failure, Irene, an old, broken down man. The tide is against me. First defeated for Congress, then in this Franchise fight; and now the earnings of a lifetime swept away at one stroke. I wouldn't worry, if it were not on your account, my child, but to see you have to give up the home in which you were born and reared seems almost more than I can bear."

"I won't hear you talk so, Father. You are not broken down; you are not a failure," she insisted energetically. "But there is my money," she added, the thought just occurring to her.

"It would not be enough to do any good, and I couldn't take it anyway."

"You must. Do you suppose I could keep it if you owed any one a dollar? But there must be some way to help you. Think, Father, think."

"No, my child, there was but one way, and that is now hopeless. Barker not only controls the new Mayor and Council, but the present Council as well, and he is implacable."

Irene shivered as with a chill. Fear and remorse gripped her heart, as she thus had so forcibly brought home to her that all unwittingly she had

been one of the principal agents in working her father's ruin.

As soon as she could recover command of herself she prevailed upon him to retire, and, leaving him with comforting words, she sought her own room.

With a peculiar feeling of nausea that made her deathly faint, she sank into a chair and gave way to a poignant remorse. How would her father feel if he knew how she had been conspiring to work his ruin? It was but little comfort that she did not understand the full significance of her actions. And she remembered now that at two of the critical periods when the cause of her father was apparently on the eve of victory, she had used the weight of her influence to turn the scale the other way. There was but one thing for her to do and that was to make all the amends in her power. There was but one thing that presented itself, and she shrank from this with an indescribable repugnance. An appeal must be made to Robert.

The humiliation of making such an appeal to an unacknowledged lover, only a refined, high-bred, sensitive woman can appreciate. Yet she determined to ask him to make this sacrifice for her. Strange as it may seem, she worked herself up to the belief that both she and Robert would be justified in taking the action contemplated.

At first she thought of making her request in

writing, but concluding that a personal appeal would be more certain and effective, she wrote the following note:

"DEAR ROBERT,

Will you please call at our house as soon as possible after receiving this. I want to see you very much.

Very sincerely yours,

IRENE HENLEY."

Slipping down to the door, she dropped the letter in the mailbox and returning threw herself on the bed and gave way to a passionate outburst of weeping.

The strongest of men are sometimes surprised in their periods of weakness, and it had been so with the Judge. He was already at the table when Irene came down to breakfast.

To her surprise he seemed to be complete master of himself, and aside from the lines of trouble on his face and the extra tenderness of his voice as he said, "Good-morning, my dear," gave no indication of the scene they had passed through.

Barker carelessly shuffling his mail as it was thrown on his desk about 10 A. M., caught sight of the dainty envelope with the well known monogram and handwriting of Irene. He turned it upon edge and looked at it. His face softened and glowed. It mattered little what was in it. It was the signi-

ficance of the letter itself; the changed relations and all the possibilities growing out of it.

His hand trembled as he slit the envelope and drew forth the missive, which his eyes eagerly devoured. The last barriers had fallen; the struggle was over and Irene had decided to openly resume their former relations. Everything was coming his way at last. That seemed to be the way of the world. If misfortunes never come singly, the same might be said of good fortune. Victory in politics and victory in love, and oh, how much sweeter the latter.

When Barker arrived, Irene received him with a glow of pleasure on her speaking countenance, and as she placed both hands in his and allowed her eyes to beam on him with no effort to hide her feelings, he was almost transported with delight.

"It was so good of you, Robert, to come so promptly," she said, as she reluctantly withdrew her hands and motioned him to a seat on the sofa beside her. Her voice was like sweetest music to his hungering heart.

"I came the moment I received your note, Irene."

"That looks as if you were anxious to please me," she said, with a coquettish smile, as if seeking to draw out an expression of his interest in her.

He was pale with the effort to keep his feelings within bounds, as he replied, "You know there is nothing in the world that would give me so much

pleasure as to be able to do something that would please you."

Her eyes drooped under his ardent gaze and her heart smote her for the moment, as she braced herself to make her request. "You don't know how delighted I am to hear you say that, for I have a very important favor to ask of you."

"It's granted before you ask it," he answered, "if it is within my power to grant it. What is it, Irene, I can do to please you?"

"It is of the very greatest importance. The very greatest you could grant, and its refusal means ruin and dishonor to Father and poverty to both of us," and her voice trembled and choked as she proceeded. "I must tell you, Robert, that Father invested everything he had in the world, and more too, in Street Railway stock just before this Franchise began to be agitated, and if it does not go through he is irretrievably ruined, and I want you to withdraw your opposition to its passage as it was originally drawn." Her whole soul shone in her eyes as she turned them upon him.

He had leaned forward, absorbed and sympathetic, but as she reached the object of her appeal, he covered his eyes with his hands and sank back with a groan of dismay, "My God! My God!" he exclaimed under his breath, "And this is the end? Absolute dishonor or lose Irene."

Honor—what is honor? No woman and but few

men possess it in its fullest development. Honor is the highest principle of life—love the most powerful emotion. The great majority of humanity are incapable of the best type of either, but when they are pitted against each other in a fight to the finish, in a nature capable of the highest conception of both, the experience rises to the height of a profound tragedy.

One fights with the sword of justice, the other with the spear of selfishness; both formidable weapons, and neither has ever won a complete victory.

She waited, panting and expectant.

His lips felt dry, his tongue parched. It seemed for the moment that he could not collect his faculties, and his throat contracted spasmodically two or three times before he was able to articulate. He could not meet her eyes at first, as he began, "You surely can't understand, Irene, what your request means. Don't you see that everybody would say at once that I had at last succumbed to the schemes of the Street Railway Company? I would be pointed out as a traitor and bribe taker. I, the man who has been posing as the champion of the people, and the denouncer of weaklings and bribe-takers. Would I not be considered a fit target for the finger of scorn and the voice of contumely—and justly so? But I could bear all that even, if it af-

fected me only. It is sacrificing the rights of many thousand others that I cannot bring myself to."

It was like searing her heart with a hot iron as he pictured the result of such action, but she had worked herself up to such a pitch that she felt that everybody and everything must be offered in sacrifice on the altar of her atonement.

"Oh, Robert, I know how you feel, but it will not be nearly so bad as you picture it. What is the saving of a cent or two occasionally for a few thousand people to Father's ruin and disgrace at his time of life. I do not speak for myself. I could bear poverty willingly, but I can't bear to think that I am to blame for bringing this trouble on him, for I helped do it. It was I that got Thompson and Bartley to vote with you as they did, and it was I who furnished the money when Charlie said you would surely be defeated without it. Can't you see, Robert? Don't you understand that without my aid you could not have won, and that if this thing goes on, that it will be me who helped to disgrace and impoverish my own father? Surely you will be merciful now that you know."

"*You* got Thompson and Bartley to vote for the postponement? *You* furnished the money to close our campaign on?" he queried in overwhelming and pained surprise.

"Yes, Robert, I did not want to tell you, but there was no other way to convince you that you ought

to, that you *must* grant my request. I am pleading in the name of the gratitude you used to entertain towards Father. Yes, Robert, I am pleading in the name of the love which you have told me you felt for me." Her hands were extended and her eyes overrunning with tears. "I am pleading with you, Robert, for what is dearer than life to Father and myself."

Springing to his feet, he paced the floor back and forth in his agitation.

He realized what it had cost Irene to make the request she had, yet, knowing her disposition as he did, he felt that if he did not measure up to her expectations in this supreme test of his love that she would be almost, if not quite, implacable. Was there anything dearer in life to him than her love and companionship? Was he not, even, under honorable obligations to do as she asked? The aid which she had extended, had made victory possible to him, and would have gone to the other side had she known the conditions.

Then he dwelt upon her grief and remorse. Could he steel his heart to stab her in the very citadel of her filial affection and drag her and her father down from affluence to poverty?

He recalled his student days when the Judge had taken him into his office and given him a start in life. A thousand memories came trooping back to him of little favors conferred upon him by his old

preceptor, in the gruff, brusque manner so natural to him, but inspired by a noble and generous heart, nevertheless. All the bitterness which he had been storing up against him disappeared. It seemed that he could see the brave old fighter standing before him with the great, strong head bowed and with a broken spirit, yet still too proud to ask for mercy, while Irene with her arms around him as if to shield him, turned her eyes toward himself with such a look of piteous appeal that he could not bear to meet her gaze. Throwing himself sideways into a chair with his arms over the back, he buried his face, while a great sob choked him, as he cried out, "Good God! How can I do this thing?"

The crisis of his emotion being past, he raised his head and spoke: "You know, Irene, I love you better than anything on earth except my honor, and I sympathize deeply with your father, but private interests must be made subservient to the public good. It nearly breaks my heart to refuse your request, but I cannot deliberately betray the people."

The shock of disappointment completely unnerved her. Dropping back in her seat, the slow, scalding tears welled from her eyes and ran down over her face. She did not at first analyze her feelings closely enough to know which took precedence, sympathy for herself and father, or regret that Robert's love had not been equal to the sacrifice

she had asked at his hands. This was immediately succeeded by a feeling of outraged pride and of burning indignation that he should treat her with such gross injustice. Rising, she paced the floor angrily, giving vent to her feelings at first in short, explosive sentences.

"You are cruel! Cruel! Absolutely heartless. This is your great love for me! You would drag us both down to poverty and my father's honored name into disgrace, all to save a paltry cent in the street car fare. And yet you prate about love, and of your high regard for my Father. Pah! It sickens me. Private interest must be made subservient to the public good! What cant! To your own insatiable ambitions, you should have said."

Then the hot torrent of angry words ceased suddenly and she stood panting and choking with indignation she could not find words to express. When she resumed, the cold, quiet contempt of her voice was even more cutting. "I invited you here and I cannot very well order you away, but will you not go? Please go, before I so far forget myself as to order you to. I have only one further request to make of you, Mr. Barker, and that is, that you will never look at me or speak to me again. No, nor even think of me unless it may be to recall that you have been an ingrate to the man who gave you your start in life, and that you have made his daughter work her own father's ruin."

Barker shrank and cowered as if she had been lashing him with a whip, and as she finished, sprang forward, pale to the lips, with passionate appeal in his eyes, "Irene, Irene, don't say ——"

With gleaming eyes, she raised her hand imperiously and checked him, as she pointed to the door, "For Heaven's sake go!"

And with bowed head and uncertain steps he groped his way to the hallway and out of the door.

As Barker passed out, the tense expression on Irene's face relaxed, and as she sank into a chair nervelessly, she wailed: "Great Heavens! What have I done?" And sitting there dry-eyed, stared into a future in which she could see no ray of light to brighten the gloom.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE PASSAGE OF THE BLANKET FRANCHISE.

Ordinarily, Barker had complete control of his temper and seldom lost his balance. He was just in the mood for an explosion, however, when a couple of days after his heart-rending interview with Irene, Mr. Morse stepped into his office, and after greeting him, laid a note on his desk, with the remark, "I have been retained as Counsel, Mr. Barker, by the Barnet Car and Bridge Works, and here is an order for you to turn over all papers to me."

Hastily glancing over the note, Barker responded, "Very well, Mr. Morse," and turning to his files, handed him a bundle of papers, "You will find them all here."

There was a look of mingled embarrassment and triumph on Morse's face as he said, "This isn't very pleasant business for me, Barker, and if you'll take my advice, you'll let up on this street car fight. It has cost you a good deal of business already, and it will ruin your practice if you continue it."

"You didn't apply for this appointment then?"

Morse flushed painfully. "Well, I won't say that, but I didn't apply till Milligan told me the Company was going to make a change, and I thought I might as well have it as anybody."

"I'm inclined to think that's not the first time you've made that excuse, Morse," and there was quiet contempt in the tone. "I will say to you, for your information and that of your friends, that when I can't practice law with a conscience, I will withdraw from the profession."

"I don't like your words or your tone, Barker. If you mean to insinuate that I have no conscience, I want you to understand I resent it."

Morse's eyes dropped under Barker's steady gaze, as he replied: "I won't say that you have *no* conscience, but when I remember how enthusiastic you were in this Franchise fight in the beginning and how suddenly you deserted us when the Street Railway Company offered you a retainer, and what an abject creature of theirs you have been ever since, **I will say that whatever conscience you have is so little and contemptible that it nauseates an honest man to think about it.**"

By the time Barker had finished they were both on their feet, standing breast to breast and eye to eye.

"I will hold you responsible for this," Morse snarled savagely, and even as he did so, his eyes shifted uneasily from his adversary's face.

"As you please," was the quiet answer, "but it seems to me you already have about all the responsibilities you ought to assume." And as reaching over, he grasped his arm and moved him quietly towards the door, "Let me give *you* a little advice, Morse. Take your papers and go. I'm afraid if you stay here much longer you might meet with an accident that would incapacitate you for business." The hand on Morse's arm was gripping him like a band of steel.

"I'm no bully or brawler, Barker, but you will find I'm not an enemy to be despised," Morse exclaimed tremulously as he reached the door.

"Better an open enemy than a false friend. I concede you are not a bully, but you have two of the most important requirements for one. You are both a physical and moral coward. Good day," and the door closed on the discomfited creature of the Street Railway Company.

The negotiations for the preparation of a franchise ordinance that would be accepted by all the interested parties, went steadily forward, and were attended by interested spectators whose number was only limited by the capacity of the chamber. Barker and Carson appeared for the people, and Milligan and Henley represented the company. Day after day both sides fought stubbornly and gallantly. Though sitting opposite at the table, Judge Henley and Barker never addressed each other di-

rectly, yet much of what each said was directed *at* the other.

The formal arguments upon each section were by common consent left to the Judge and Barker. At such times the Judge reminded one of an old war-horse scenting the battle afar off. He would rise, throw back his shoulders, run his fingers through the heavy mane of iron gray hair that topped his massive head, shake himself as if in preparation for the fray, then launch into his argument. Barker, cool, collected, and impassive, his pale face set and determined, met eloquence with eloquence, wit with wit, and logic with logic. It was a battle of gladiators. Never in the history of that Council-chamber had there been such an exhibition of legal lore and forensic eloquence.

After many days of wrangling and argument, the Railway Company at last agreed to give eight tickets for a quarter, if the Citizens' Committee would agree not to contest their right to perpetuity in certain of their franchises. This the committee would not consent to, and a compromise was effected, providing for seven tickets for a quarter, the connecting of both the blue and yellow lines, which had been operated separately, with universal transfers on tickets in lieu of a five cent cash fare for transfers; the operation of owl cars an hour apart from midnight until five A. M.; and limiting the life of the Franchise to twenty-five years, with

the further proviso that the fares were to be reduced to three cents whenever the annual gross receipts of the company reached one million, seven hundred thousand dollars.

The question of perpetuity of the questionable franchises was taken to the courts, where it still rests, neither side making any effort to bring the matter to a final issue. The respective contestants being in much the same position as two boys stripped for a fight, and each waiting for the other to take the initiative: "One's afraid, and the other dasn't."

Barker, Carson, Marston, and the other active fighters felt that they had cause for congratulation, though suffering a partial defeat. Under the plan proposed the fare would be reduced a fraction over a cent, which would effect a saving to the people during the life of the Franchise, of not less than ten million dollars. Last, but not least, a precedent had been established which would save untold millions to the people of the country in the future.

The scene enacted on the final passage of the Blanket Franchise ordinance by the council was almost a duplication of that which occurred at the time of the motion for postponement, with the difference that all antagonism seemed to be forgotten for the time being.

One of the spectators brought the jubilation to a climax, when in a spirit that was a mixture of

hilarity and thankfulness he started up, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow," and the whole gathering joined in singing the doxology with an enthusiasm that did credit to their lungs, if not to their piety.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE RUNAWAY.

Barker was now the acknowledged leader of his party in the city, and his fame had spread abroad so that he was a recognized power in state politics.

He was not slow in asserting himself and insisted that the paramount issue of the next campaign must be the repeal of the Fifty-year Franchise act.

Though he endeavored to absorb himself in business and politics he carried a heavy heart with him at all times. He grew abstracted and morose, and in dealing with people was often times brusque and abrupt.

That engaging smile, that hearty, magnetic grasp of the hand, was a thing of the past. His friends were pained and surprised at the change in him, while others expressed the opinion that he had the "big head" and was now indifferent to the common herd, since they had won him the victory and elevated him to power.

He occasionally passed Irene on the street or met her in society, but she always looked away from over, or through him, without sign of recognition. This cut him to the quick.

He thought at times when he could catch a glimpse of her face in repose that she appeared to be in deep trouble, but ordinarily, when he was around, she seemed in excellent spirits. Mr. Morse was so constantly with her that he was almost like her shadow, and he judged from her actions and appearance that his attentions were very pleasing to her.

At times when he had been so obviously ignored by Irene he felt so hurt and indignant that he longed for her to make some advances to him that he might have the opportunity of rejecting them.

The opportunity came unexpectedly. Irene, having occasion to go down town one morning, a new horse which the Judge had recently purchased was hitched up to a pneumatic-tired runabout. The animal was apparently gentle, but high spirited, and in deference to the previously expressed wish of her father, she took their colored driver along with her.

They had driven down to one of the side streets in the business section of the city and the driver had gone into a building on an errand. She was sitting carelessly, holding the lines loosely in her hand, when a fire alarm gong struck and almost instantly the chief's rig, which was standing already hitched at the engine house a few doors away, dashed by her with the gong clanging vigorously.

Irene's horse made a spring forward and then stood still with his head high in the air and his ears

pointed forward, while he trembled violently in every limb, undecided whether to run or stand, but before she could get her reins fully tightened up, the hose cart and the engine shot out from the house amid a great clanging of gongs and shouting at the horses as the drivers plied them with their whips. Her horse turned and looked at the approaching objects, then with a great bound was away with the speed of the wind. Though the horse was a powerful one and wild with terror, Irene, by this time, had the reins well in hand and might possibly have got him under control, when away from the vicinity of the noise and clatter of the fire apparatus, but unfortunately, in crossing a net work of street car tracks at the junction of the next street, one of the pneumatic tires was caught in the tracks in some peculiar manner and wrenched off.

The strange metallic noise made by the wheel in its revolutions, constantly increasing as it became more battered and which was apparently relentlessly pursuing him, seemed to drive the beast frantic and he became perfectly uncontrollable.

The terrified people as they saw the runaway that seemed the very incarnation of power bearing down on them, rushed screaming to one side. A few of the more courageous rushed out into the street to stop the horse's wild career, but the animal bore down on them with gigantic strides, seemingly

regardless of their presence, and they had to spring aside to keep from being trampled under foot.

The horse had run a number of squares while Irene sat straining upon the lines, powerless now even to guide him, looking pale as death, which she felt awaiting her, yet uttering never a sound.

The horse now turned to the busiest part of the principal street of the city and but a couple of blocks away was a perfect jam of street cars, vehicles and pedestrians. Nothing short of a miracle, it seemed, could avert Irene's absolute destruction, and the injury of no telling how many others in the terror and confusion which would ensue from the collision.

Robert was passing along the street at the time, and hearing the thundering hoofs, the metallic impact of the broken and twisted wheel, and the terrified and excited shouts of the people, looked around and took in the situation at a glance.

As he recognized Irene, a deadly terror struck his heart and for a moment every faculty seemed paralyzed. It could only have been for the fractional part of a second, and then with an unuttered prayer of "Help me, God," he sprang into the street and began racing, as if his life were at stake, in the direction the horse was going, looking over his shoulder the while. As it came even with him, he made a supreme effort and grasped the rear end of the runaway, and with a spring aided by the momen-

tum of the vehicle, landed in the rear end behind the seat. Straightening himself up, he leaned over Irene and grasped the lines.

He was a very powerful man and by the exercise of his great strength, aided by the fact that the horse was now partially exhausted, brought him to a stop within twenty feet of an impassable blockade of cars and vehicles that were wildly endeavoring to escape the threatened collision.

As the horse stopped, trembling and snorting, Irene looked up and recognizing him, cried out, "Oh, Robert! Robert!" then laid her head on the back of the seat and gave two or three quivering sobs.

The spectators now came hurrying up from all directions, anxious to assist in holding the horse and in any other way possible.

Irene, immediately recovering her composure, gracefully returned her thanks for the many offers of assistance and expressions of sympathy which were showered upon her.

The coachman, who had been pursuing the runaway with all speed possible, now came up, and turning the outfit over to him, Robert ordered a cab to take Irene home, for though she bore herself bravely, he could see that she was greatly overwrought and fatigued by her perilous experience.

Hardly a word was spoken as they rode along to her home. Leaning back, she closed her eyes and

occasionally a little shiver would pass over her, while she gave vent to a half sighing, half sobbing respiration. She had retained her hold on Robert's hand as he assisted her into the cab, and at times there would be a nervous tightening of her grasp, that showed the stress of her feelings. Once she impulsively raised his hand and touched her lips to it, then pressed it against her cheek. He withdrew it slowly, but decisively.

Now that she was safe, his pride was up in arms, and he began to regain his feeling of resentment at the injustice with which she had treated him.

As he helped her out, he still retained his grasp on the door of the vehicle, as if to return as he came, when she said, "Are you not coming in?" and there was an appeal in the question.

"Do you want me to, Irene?"

"I haven't thanked you yet."

Without a word he accompanied her, but it is doubtful if he was any more excited at the time of the runaway.

Aunt Eliza admitted them and her face beamed all over with pleasure as she saw them together.

"My gracious, Miss Irene," she cried, "I sutinly didn't spect toh see youh back so soon. I'se awful glad toh see yoh, Mistah Bahkuh. It's good foh de soh eyes."

"Thank you, Aunt Liza," he responded. "Its good for something besides sore eyes."

"If you's 'ferrin' toh de hah't, I spects yoh is in

about de right place en 'bout in de propah condition toh. What de good Lawd puts togeddah let no man jine asundah. Dem's my sentimen's."

Robert laughed rather ironically, and Irene blushed at this bold expression, and exclaimed rather sternly, "Aunt Liza, I'm surprised to hear you speak in that way to Mr. Barker."

"Pshaw, Honey, yoh musin' min' what an old niggah like I is, says; Mistah Robert doan min.' Does yoh Mistah Bahkah?"

"No, indeed, Aunty," he replied in a half satirical tone, as he followed Irene to the reception room, "I admire your perspicacity."

"Perspicacity? Perspicacity? I wonder what he do mean by dat?" she muttered as she turned away. "Sutinly he doan mean one o' dese acity sour kind o' things, what draws yoh mouf all up."

Irene turned as they entered the room and as her glance met his, her head drooped and her eyes sought the floor.

Isn't every man a tyrant when the opportunity presents?

He stood just within the door, and queried: "Well?"

She made a step toward him and then stopped, flushing painfully. As she stood there in all her glorious beauty, her bosom heaving with emotion, her eyes shining with moisture like luminous stars, the color coming and going in her cheeks, as she struggled to control her feelings—love and contri-

tion, pride and embarrassment, each fighting for mastery,—she presented a picture of loveliness and distress that ought to have softened any man's heart.

As Barker looked at her his heart throbbed with a fierce desire to take her in his arms and comfort and caress her, but his pride came to the rescue and he determined that there should be no relenting on his part until she had first humbled her own pride.

Again she timidly raised her eyes to his and the appealing expression was well nigh irresistible, but he resolutely steeled his heart and his voice was questioning, apparently slightly impatient as he said, "I am waiting, Irene."

As is customary with people of intense nature, the barriers were broken down with a rush. Gliding impulsively forward, she grasped his hand in both her own and as she clung to it and pressed it unconsciously against her breast, she threw her head back and while her eyes sought his in tearful entreaty, she pleaded, "Oh, Robert, don't be so cruel! Won't you forgive me, Robert? I've been so ashamed, so sorry, so unhappy," she added with a little strangling sob.

The moisture sprang to his own eyes and a great lump came in his throat, as his arms closed round her and he held her close—close, as his lips met the fragrant ones so near his own in a long, clinging pressure.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A CONGRESSIONAL CONVENTION.

Though Robert and Irene had a thorough understanding and met quite frequently after the run-away episode, both at her home and socially elsewhere, they did not consider it propitious to broach the subject of their marriage to the Judge for some time. Robert felt that it would look as if he were taking undue advantage of his gratitude to press the matter right after rendering such signal service to Irene. When she took it upon herself sometime later to make an appeal to her father, she was rebuffed harshly.

"No!" he thundered in response. "Do you think I will consent for my daughter to marry a man who allows no opportunity to pass to insult and revile me? If the man had any sense of decency or regard for my feelings, he wouldn't insist on fighting me and every measure with which I have been connected."

It was at a time when Barker was conducting an active canvass in behalf of his choice for nominations to the State Senate and the Lower House of

the Legislature and had made it a condition precedent to his support that they publicly proclaim their intention, if elected, of voting for the repeal of the Fifty-year Franchise law, of which Judge Henley was the father.

He succeeded in nominating this ticket, upon which were Galvin and Stewart, as labor representatives, and which his opponents, not having the fear of the Lord before their eyes, called "Barker's slate," just as if he were a political Boss. It might be stated here that they were elected, and the very first act of the incoming legislature was the repeal of the iniquitous measure.

The surprise of the campaign came in the unexpected death of Colonel Holmes before he had taken his seat in Congress and a call was issued to fill the vacancy at the regular fall election.

The day after Col. Holmes' death "The Chronicle" mentioned Barker as the most available candidate for the succession and many of his friends joined in this expression. He felt sensitive, however, about proclaiming his candidacy, owing to the charges made during the mayoralty campaign of his intention to try and defeat Colonel Holmes for renomination. Just as he was beginning to give the matter serious thought, he received a call from Major Horton, an Ex-State Senator, and a prominent, well-to-do citizen of the city. He had aided Barker some, but not very actively, in the franchise

and mayoralty fights and they were on very friendly terms.

The Major opened the conversation by saying: "I came to ask a great favor at your hands, Mr. Barker."

"What is it, Major? I will take pleasure in serving you in any way I can consistently."

With such encouragement the Major, the lines in his cheeks quivering with earnestness, made an almost piteous appeal to Barker not to be a candidate, claiming that he was an old man himself and that this would be his only opportunity, while Barker had his whole life before him.

"Very well, Major," he replied, "I will not be in your way. But if it should possibly transpire that the nomination is tendered me, I want to be at liberty to accept without feeling that I am violating any principle of honor or obligation."

"Thank you, thank you," he answered warmly, grasping his hand. "If anything happens that will prevent my securing the prize, nothing will give me more pleasure than to turn my strength over to you."

Marston, Carson, Galvin, Stewart, and other of Barker's friends were very indignant when they found out he had decided not to enter the contest.

"I haven't any patience with you, Bob," Marston remarked at a conference of his friends who were endeavoring to get him to rescind his decision.

"You ought to have a guardian appointed. You had a dead cinch on the nomination, and to think you would throw it over your shoulder for Horton. He has no chance. His day has gone by. You can't make a congressman out of him."

"I know you're not much of an admirer of Major Horton, Charlie, and yet you will probably go to the convention and vote for him."

"I may do that, but it won't change my opinion. I'm like the clothing merchant who saw a great crowd flocking into a competitor's store, and asked his clerk the cause of it. 'I understand a man's got a fit in there,' was the reply. 'I know that's a lie, no man ever got a fit in his store,' the merchant answered, and in my opinion you can never make a congressman of Horton. It ain't in him."

"Well, I've decided, and I think that settles it," Barker said decisively.

Charlie flushed a little, but was not entirely squelched.

"That reminds me," he answered, "of an employer who said to his clerk, 'Say, is there any doubt in your mind which of us is bossing this job?' 'No, Sir,' he answered, 'I admit I'm not the Boss.' 'Well, then, stop talking like a jackass and get a move on you,' was the command. I guess I'd better be getting a move on me."

Though Barker took no part in the contest for

Congressional delegate, he was elected from his own ward as a delegate.

The convention was called in the county seat of Union County.

The city and county had a greater population than was necessary under the Congressional apportionment act, but as this increase had been made since the decennial apportionment, Union County was still a part of the district, and had one of the leading candidates in the person of Mr. Shields. Another candidate, and the one who had the largest following in the convention, was ex-Judge Carlisle.

Judge Henley, while not openly taking any part in the contest, and not a candidate for renomination by his own party—not considering the times propitious for success—was intensely interested in the result of the convention and was in attendance, ostensibly on legal business. He had, at Irene's solicitation, taken her and Alice with him on the trip.

As a matter of fact, the Judge was there in the interest of Judge Carlisle, with whom he had been intimately associated on the bench some years previously, and who had, under cover, aided him materially in his Congressional canvass.

Owing to certain financial obligations, and personal favors he had bestowed, he had a marked influence with several delegates, and two men, Williams and Zinn, he absolutely controlled.

The scenes about the hotel which was the principal headquarters of the politicians, were interesting and exciting.

The convention was a large one, consisting of two hundred and fifty-eight delegates, while each candidate was accompanied by a band and a large delegation of friends.

The scene to Irene and Alice, who looked down into the lobby from the balcony overhead, was both inspiring and amusing.

The most interesting of all sights to them, however, was when Robert entered. Almost immediately was he surrounded by friends and former acquaintances, as well as by those seeking an introduction. As long as he remained in the lobby it was like an official levee, and through it all he was calm, smiling, and courteous. He greeted every one with a pleasant word and a hand-shake, replying patiently to enquiries, but volunteering hardly a remark—yet everybody apparently hung on his words, as if they were the embodiment of all wisdom.

The convention was called to order with full delegations, and after the election of temporary officers, which tested the strength of the various candidates, adjourned till one thirty P. M.

The temporary organization was continued when the convention reassembled in the afternoon. Balloting began immediately after the disposal of a

few minor contests reported from the Committee on Credentials, and the delivering of the nominating speeches, limited to five minutes each.

The first few ballots showed a number of scattering votes cast by way of compliment for men who were not serious candidates, and then settled down to Horton ninety-three, Shields fifty-eight, Carlisle one hundred and seven.

This continued till the adjournment was taken for supper.

At the evening session the Horton and Shields forces began to disintegrate; four of the Horton men and eight of the Shields men going to Carlisle, making the latter's vote one hundred and nineteen, Horton eighty-nine, and Shields fifty.

On every ballot now there was a perfect uproar, the vote of every delegation being challenged, while charges and counter-charges of fraud in the announcing of the vote and of corruption of the delegates were hurled back and forth.

Marston, Carson, Stewart, Galvin, Thompson, Bartley, and others of Barker's friends had stood staunchly by Horton, but had been doing a little quiet missionary work on the side, and they began now to play for delay and to work for an adjournment before the convention stampeded to Carlisle.

Finally getting the floor against the protests of the Carlisle managers, Marston made a motion that a roster of the delegates be prepared and that here-

after all ballots be taken by a call of the roll and response by the individual delegates. It was immediately seconded, and Charlie supported the motion with an able and impassioned speech, taking the ground that the nomination was of too great importance to have even a taint of fraud and uncertainty about it, and calling attention to the many instances in which the votes had been incorrectly announced, either by mistake or intentionally.

The motion was ridiculed by the Carlisle men as being entirely unprecedented and also on the ground that it would consume too much valuable time.

Galvin followed in support of the motion, saying that the convention could afford to take time to do things right, but could not afford to do wrong to save time.

The Horton and Shields men voting together, carried the motion, and the various delegation chairmen were instructed to furnish the Secretary of the convention with a roster of the delegates of the different wards and townships to be arranged in alphabetical order for convenience in calling the roll, after which, the convention adjourned till the next morning at ten.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

BARKER IS INTRODUCED AS A DARK HORSE.

That was a very busy night for the political managers after the adjournment of the convention. Every sort of cajolery, argument, and other influences, which are too often potent in political contests, were used by the Carlisle men to break down the opposition, which was very determined on the part of the greater number of Horton and Shields men, though signs of demoralization had already shown themselves in the desertions which had taken place.

Marston and Galvin had worked so strenuously for delay in order to secure time for combination.

The plans which Marston had been so busy formulating were known only to his intimates, and when the convention adjourned for the night, the Carlisle men, and in fact nearly every one, thought that a desperate effort would be made during the interim to combine on either Horton or Shields.

The Judge was describing some of the scenes of the convention to Irene on his return after the night adjournment, when he remarked, "Robert Barker is easily the biggest man in the convention,

—he has more character and more ability. If he'd have gone into this fight it would have been all over but the shouting."

"That is a good deal for you to say," Irene remarked, surprised that he should speak favorably of Robert.

"Well, I suppose I'll have to give the devil his due. He was right about that Franchise business, and we were all wrong. The road is carrying so many more passengers than it was under the old rate that it will be the most prosperous year in its history. Instead of ruining me, as I thought it would, my stock is worthy twenty-five per cent. more than it was when I purchased it. That Franchise fight was really *A Victorious Defeat* for both of us."

Taking advantage of this opening Irene said, "If you think that, what makes you so opposed to Robert, when you know our hearts are set upon each other?"

He looked at her in a sort of grim surprise for a moment, but showed no particular displeasure as he answered, "There are a good many people have their hearts set. I've got mine, for instance, set on Judge Carlisle getting the nomination."

"How absurd," she exclaimed rather resentfully, and yet secretly gratified that he would even discuss the matter. "How can you make such a comparison?"

"Every heart knows its own desire," he responded in a mildly ironical tone. "Since we are talking about these heart-sets, I'll make you a proposition that may result in us all getting what our hearts are set on. If Robert will cast his vote for Judge Carlisle tomorrow on the first ballot, I will make no further objections to your marriage. He has fought me in every way possible, we will see if he is willing to make this much concession to get his heart's desire."

"You really mean that?"

"Yes, I mean every word of it."

"You dear, darling, old father," and the Judge for a few moments was in danger of being smothered by the warmth of her caresses.

To Irene, the fulfillment of the condition seemed the easiest kind of a matter, for Robert had expressed to her privately that as between the candidates he had but little personal choice.

In making the conditions which he had, Judge Henley had not counted so much on the value of Barker's single vote, as upon the fact that if he broke away from the Horton forces the influence of his action would create a panic that would mean many votes for Judge Carlisle, and practically settle the nomination.

At the very moment that the Judge and Irene were having their conversation, Marston and his friends were laying the condition of affairs before

Major Horton, and informed him there was no longer any chance for him or anybody else to beat Carlisle, unless a combination could be made on Barker.

"I realize the truth of your statement, gentlemen," he said sadly, "and I desire to thank you for standing by me so loyally, and will now withdraw, with the request that my friends support Mr. Barker."

The same sort of a result followed a conference with Mr. Shields and his managers, but while there are delegates who will support a candidate indefinitely for first choice, they have a mind of their own for second choice and resent any effort that looks like transferring their votes to another candidate.

None of the Carlisle men could consistently desert him while he was in the lead, no matter how much they may have preferred Barker, and the releasing of the Horton and Shields men from their obligations made all that night a battle royal for supremacy.

It was long past midnight, and after the severest kind of labor with the wavering and uncertain delegates, that Marston, Galvin, Stewart, Carson, and a number of others assembled in Carson's room and going carefully over the situation, found they had definitely pledged to Barker one hundred and thirty votes, or just enough to nominate.

"Well, I guess we can take a rest, can't we, Charlie?" Carson asked, for though he was Mars-ton's employer, they all conceded him the leadership in the fight.

"Yes, we've got 'em all lined up and have got a tab on every man, and I thank the Lord for it. I've talked enough tonight to talk the head and arms off a man."

"Well, for gracious sake, don't get wound up, old man, we've all had enough of it," Galvin exclaimed laughingly.

"Why you don't think I'm like the Kansas farmer's clock?" Charlie enquired innocently.

"Oh, it's bound to come, let's hear it, and then we'll go in and see Barker and turn in for the night," Galvin responded with a resigned expression.

"There's not much to it, but I'd like to have you bear it in mind when you're making one of those long-winded labor speeches of yours. It ran eight days without winding. You can imagine how long it would run if it was wound up."

"Come along, you old Waterbury," said Galvin, grasping him by the collar, and all of them aiding, they rushed him from the room to pay their respects to Barker before retiring for the night.

The party of friends entered Barker's room in boisterous good humor at the success of their labors.

"You seem to be in excellent humor, judging from your expression," he observed smilingly.

"Why shouldn't we?" Charlie asked. "We've got a surprise in store for some of these astute politicians."

"You think, then, that you have matters pretty definitely fixed?"

"Sure. There are two or three white-livered fellows that have so little good red blood in them that they have to chew brick dust to give it color, and if the other fellows get at them they'll either weaken or allow themselves to be bought, but we don't count on them."

"You don't give them credit for doing their own thinking?"

"Think? Why, they don't know what it means. They'd have to stand on their heads to get enough blood in their cerebrums to think, and they need a plaster paris jacket to keep their spinal cords from collapsing."

"They're not equipped with the Gordon backbone, then?"

"Well, I should remark! They are limber enough to make good barrel hoops. They act as if their vertebrae had been extracted and substituted with lymph and limberger cheese."

"You seem to have made a very careful diagnosis of their condition."

"You bet we have. Why, there's been more wire-pulling about this old hotel tonight than would start a telephone exchange, but just you wait till to-

morrow, and see if we don't give some of the swell-headed politicians a run for their money. We'll make them understand that their big heads are simply cases of hydrocephalus, and what they mistake for brains is really only a surplus of water."

"You are very modest, Charlie, in your estimate of the character and ability of these political managers."

"Ability? Why you might feed some of them on fish and wheat phosphates for a year and they wouldn't develop a single convolution of their brains as big as a number two capsule, and their hearts are so small they'd have to contract twice to make their pulse beat once."

"Oh, come off, Charlie," Galvin exclaimed. "You certainly have been wound up and we can't wait for you to run down. We want to talk business," and Marston, meekly subsiding with a look of pained reproach on his face, they discussed the plans for the following day.

As the ballot was to be taken by an alphabetical call of the roll and no proxies were allowed, it was impressed upon Barker that in view of the very close vote he must throw aside any mock modesty he possessed and vote for himself.

He readily agreed to this, as since he had consented to enter the contest any other course would be a mere affectation of indifference in regard to a matter in which he was supremely interested.

Just before the time for convening, Irene sent a message by a bell-boy asking Robert to meet her for a few moments in parlor B, before going to the convention. It can readily be understood that he did not delay long in responding to this request.

As he entered, she met him with outstretched hands. He grasped them and drawing her to him impulsively, kissed her. She freed herself with some embarrassment and exclaimed, "I ought not to have permitted that, Robert. Some one might have seen us."

"I couldn't help it, Irene, you have no right to look so tempting."

"As usual, blame it on the woman. But I'll forgive you this time. I am too happy this morning to be angry at anything."

"What makes you so happy?"

"Because Father seems to be relenting towards you."

"That certainly is glorious news."

"Yes, he is so worked up over this Congressional fight that he told me if you would vote for Judge Carlisle on the first ballot this morning, he would withdraw his objections to our marriage."

He had been so absorbed in the contest that he took it for granted she understood his position, as he replied: "But surely you can't ask me to do that, Irene? It would be a great sacrifice as well as a betrayal of my friends."

"Why is it, Robert, that you or Father always find something to stand between us and our happiness? Is our love such a little thing that you can refuse my request and embitter Father still more?"

"You know, Irene, how much I love you, but do not ask this betrayal of the trust of my friends, dear."

"I suppose you are right, Robert. My love is too selfish, but my heart pleads so for it and it seemed as if it was such a little thing to ask to insure our life's happiness."

"But think what a position it puts me in, Irene."

"And think what it means for us, Robert? Is it not worth some sacrifice?"

He left her side and paced the room distractedly with tightly clenched hands.

"Don't do it, if you feel so strongly about it," she said, greatly distressed by such evidence of feeling on his part.

He turned and came towards her and taking her hands, said, "Yes, Irene, I will do it. God forgive me if I do wrong. I can't hold out any longer."

"Oh, thank you, thank you, Robert," she returned joyously. "Now we can be happy."

At this minute Charlie and Alice who had, by some means best known to lovers, drifted together, came into the room and discovered Robert and Irene.

"Hello, Bob," Charlie exclaimed. "You doing the

farewell act, too? We've got to get a move on us. We ought to have been at the Hall long before this. We're going over to enter a 'Dark Horse' in the race that will take first money or my prognosticator is out of gear," he said addressing the girls. "Why, Bob, you look as if you were going to a funeral instead of to victory."

"I'm all right, Charlie," and, feeling that there was no longer any barrier between them, he stooped and kissed Irene tenderly as he said, "Good-bye, dear."

He had gone into the presence of his beloved, alert, vigorous, proud of his own rectitude and happy in anticipation of the gratification of an ambition which opened a future to him peculiarly attractive to his temperament. When he left her, he left part of his manhood behind him. He could have sacrificed his ambition for the time being with but little compunction, but to betray the trust of his friends; to sacrifice their good opinion and to make all their hard, unselfish work go for naught and to feel so ashamed that he dared not look his friend, Charlie, full in the face, was very humiliating to one who had always been such a stickler for honor.

How many gradations of honor are there, and how many men whose honor is above price? And how draw the distinction between those who are bought with money, lust, appetite, power, position, pity, gratitude, social influence, and love?

There is a distinction in grades and price, thank God, but let each man do his own justifying. No one else can do it for him.

As Barker and Marston departed, Irene exclaimed, "Oh, Alice, I am so happy, and Father will be so pleased. He told me he would agree to withdraw his objections to Robert if he would vote for Judge Carlisle today on the first ballot, and he has agreed to do so. He looks so worried, though, it makes me feel very uneasy when I think of it."

"I'm glad, Irene, for both your sakes, but Robert is so sensitive about such things you needn't be surprised if he acted a little 'funny at first."

The Judge entered sometime after and Irene ran to him, her face sparkling with joy and said, "It's all right, Father, Robert has promised to vote as you wanted him to. Aren't you glad, Father?" not noting the startled and troubled look in his eyes.

"Do you mean he has agreed to vote for Carlisle?"

"Yes, Father,"

"Did he tell you who the other candidate was?"

"No, he never mentioned that."

"Good Lord, Child, do you know what you have done? Barker is the opposition candidate, and his will be the deciding vote. I have just found this out and you have made him promise to defeat himself for the nomination."

She placed her hands on his shoulders and leaned

back gazing at him with widening eyes, as she gasped, "Father?"

"Yes, Child."

"Oh, Father, Father, what have you made me do?" and, falling on her knees, she buried her face in the divan and sobbed as though her heart would break.

The Judge stood looking at her for a time while many conflicting emotions were depicted upon his countenance, and then turned and rushed from the room.

Alice dropped down beside Irene, and comforted and caressed her until she was restored to a degree of calmness, and took a seat on the divan by her side. She could not rest contented in any one position long, however, and springing to her feet from time to time as the minutes passed, would walk the floor in her impatience and suspense.

"I can never forgive myself, Alice," she cried. "Oh, why didn't Robert tell me? I would almost rather have died than to have asked him to make such a sacrifice. I know how ambitious he is, and Father says this nomination is almost equivalent to election."

"I'm awfully sorry, Irene, but you did not know it and can't be blamed for it."

"It breaks my heart to think of it. I feel as if I'd go mad if I have been the cause of his defeat," and she resumed her agitated walk.

"Don't go on like that, Irene, it may come out all right."

"I wish you could know how I feel, Alice. Why don't we hear? My heart seems to be choking me, and yet it thumps so against my side it feels as though it would jump out of my body.—What's that? Didn't I hear a cheer?"

"Yes, yes, I'm sure that was a cheer," Alice answered.

The sound was more distinct. "Listen, there it is again," Irene exclaimed excitedly.

At this moment the Judge rushed in, breathless and excited. They ran towards him.

"Who's elected, Father?"

"Barker, my child. Oh, it's glorious, glorious. I got Williams and Zinn to cast the deciding ballots for him."

"Oh, you dear, darling Father. You don't know how happy you have made me!" She put her arms around his neck and kissed him, then, dropping her head on his shoulder, cried unrestrainedly.

"There, there, Daughter. I was a brute I know, and have been ashamed of myself for weeks, but it's all over now," he said tenderly, patting her head the while caressingly, his eyes shining with moisture.

Boisterous cheers were now heard for Barker, mingling with the stamp of many feet entering the hotel, and in a very short time, Barker and Marston

entered. Alice ran to Charlie and gave him a good hug and kiss and Irene, not to be outdone, left her father's protecting embrace to treat Robert in like manner.

"Oh, Robert, it seems almost too good to be true," she said looking at him through her happy tears.

"Yes, dear, let us thank Charlie, your father, and my other good friends."

Turning impulsively to Charlie, and forgetting her usual dignity, she threw her arms around him and gave him a hearty kiss, and judging from the manner in which Marston received it, he had no intention of filing information against her for assault and battery.

"I hope, Barker, you won't hold any ill-will against me, for treating you so like a brute?" the Judge said feelingly, as he came forward.

"It's all forgotten, Judge. I have no room for any ill-feeling towards anyone in the world, and nothing but thankfulness to you," was the reply as their hands met in a firm clasp of friendship.

The cries of "Barker! Barker! Speech! Speech!" now became insistent and as he opened the window and stepped out on the balcony the old familiar cry greeted them.

"Barker in the morning,
Barker too at night,
Barker, Barker all day long,
Barker, he's all right."

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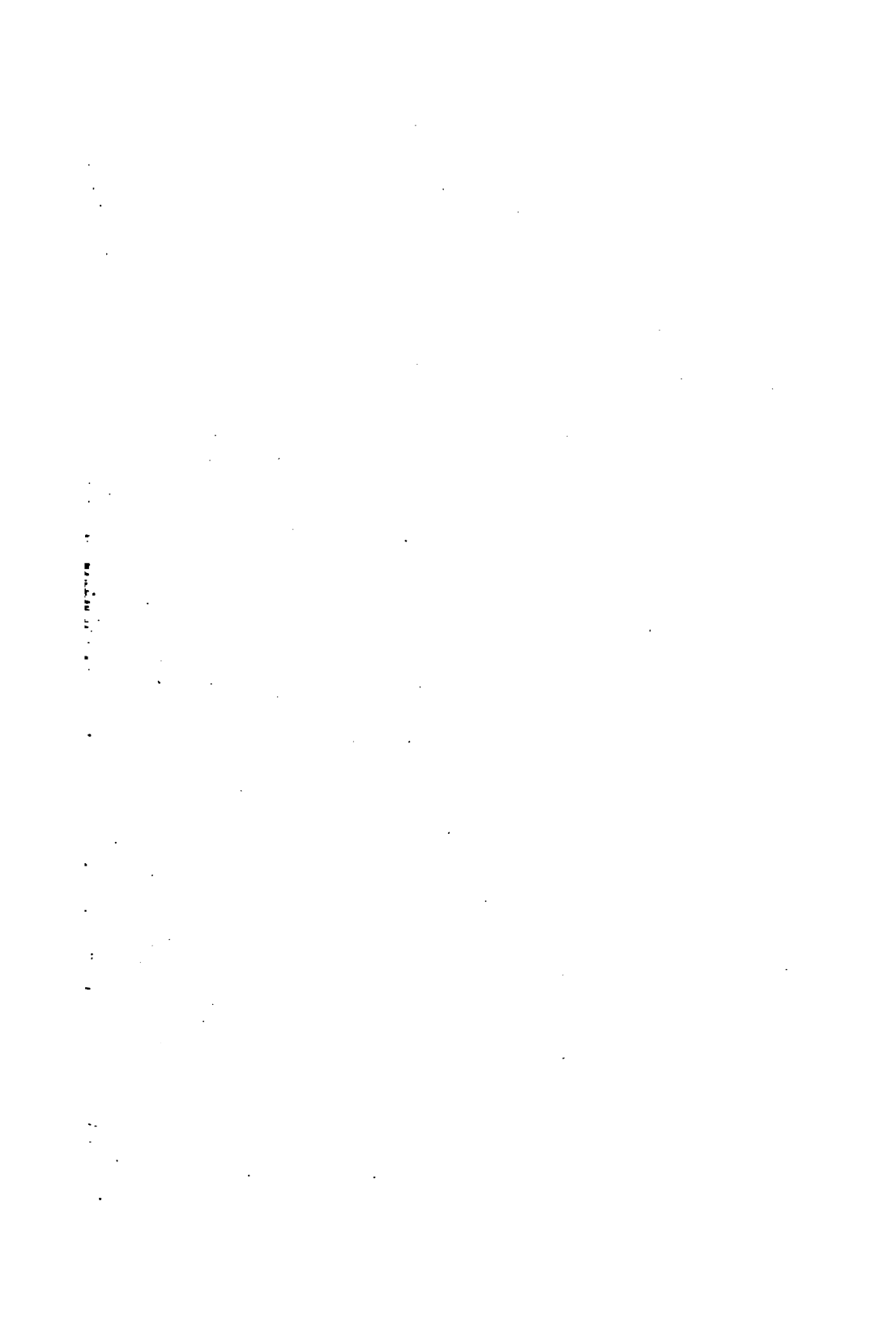
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